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THE BEQUEST OF

ISAAC MYER

RECEIVED FEBRUARY 1904

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THE

WORKS

OF

Samuel Johnſon, LL. D.

IN ELEVEN VOLUMES.

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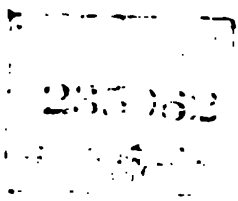

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THE

THE

LIFE

OF

Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

THE LIVES OF THE MOST EMINENT ENGLISH POETS WITH CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS ON THEIR WORKS.

VOL. II.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE EDITION OF 1783.

THE Bookſellers having determined to publiſh a Body of Engliſh Poetry, I was perſuaded to promiſe them a Preface to the Works of each Author; an undertaking, as it was then preſented to my mind, not very extenſive or difficult.

My purpoſe was only to have allotted to every Poet an Advertiſement, like thoſe which we find in the French Miſcellanies, containing a few dates and a general character; but I have been led beyond my intention, I hope, by the honeſt deſire of giving uſeful pleaſure.

In this minute kind of Hiſtory, the ſucceſſion of facts is not eaſily diſcovered; and I am not without ſuſpicion that ſome of Dryden's works are placed in wrong years. I have followed Langbaine, as the beſt authority for his plays; and if I ſhall hereafter obtain a more correct chronology, will publiſh it; but I do not yet know that my account is erroneous.

Dryden's Remarks on Rymer have been ſomewhere printed before. The former edition I have not ſeen. This was tranſcribed for the preſs from his own manuſcript.

As this undertaking was occaſional and unforeſeen, I muſt be ſuppoſed to have engaged in it with leſs proviſion of materials than might have been accumulated by longer premeditation. Of the later writers at leaſt I might, by attention and enquiry, have gleaned many particulars, which would have diverſified and enlivened my Biography. Theſe omiſſions, which it is now uſeleſs to lament, have been often ſupplied by the kindneſs of Mr. STEEVENS and others; and great aſſiſtance has been given me by Mr. SPENCE's Collections, of which I conſider the communication as a favour worthy of publick acknowledgement.

COWLEY.

COWLEY.

THE Life of Cowley, notwithſtanding the penury of Engliſh biography, has been written by Dr. Sprat, an author whoſe pregnancy of imagination and elegance of language have deſervedly ſet him high in the ranks of literature; but his zeal of friendſhip, or ambition of eloquence, has produced a funeral oration rather than a hiſtory: he has given the character, not the life of Cowley; for he writes with ſo little detail, that ſcarcely any thing is diſtinctly known, but all is ſhewn confuſed and enlarged through the miſt of panegyrick.

ABRAHAM COWLEY was born in the year one thouſand ſix hundred and eighteen. His father was a grocer, whoſe condition Dr. Sprat conceals under the general appellation of a citizen; and, what would probably not have been leſs carefully ſuppreſſed, the omiſſion of his name in the regiſter of St. Dunſtan's pariſh, gives reaſon to ſuſpect that his father was a ſectary. Whoever he was, he died before the birth of his ſon, and conſequently left him to the care of his mother; whom Wood repreſents as ſtruggling earneſtly to procure him a literary education, and who,

as ſhe lived to the age of eighty, had her ſolicitude rewarded by ſeeing her ſon eminent, and, I hope, by ſeeing him fortunate, and partaking his proſperity. We know at leaſt, from Sprat's account, that he always acknowledged her care, and juſtly paid the dues of filial gratitude.

In the window of his mother's apartment lay Spenſer's Fairy Queen; in which he very early took delight to read, till, by feeling the charms of verſe, he became, as he relates, irrecoverably a poet. Such are the accidents, which, ſometimes remembered, and perhaps ſometimes forgotten, produce that particular deſignation of mind, and propenſity for ſome certain ſcience or employment, which is commonly called Genius. The true Genius is a mind of large general powers, accidentally determined to ſome particular direction. Sir Joſhua Reynolds, the great Painter of the preſent age, had the firſt fondneſs for his art excited by the peruſal of Richardſon's treatiſe.

By his mother's ſolicitation he was admitted into Weſtminſter-ſchool, where he was ſoon diſtinguiſhed. He was wont, ſays Sprat, to relate, "That he had "this defect in his memory at that time, that his "teachers never could bring it to retain the ordinary "rules of grammar."

This is an inſtance of the natural deſire of man to propagate a wonder. It is ſurely very difficult to tell any thing as it was heard, when Sprat could not refrain from amplifying a commodious incident, though the book to which he prefixed his narrative contained its confutation. A memory admitting ſome things, and rejecting others, an intellectual digeſtion that concocted the pulp of learning, but refuſed the huſks, had

had the appearance of an inſtinctive elegance, of a particular proviſion made by Nature for literary poliſheneſs. But in the author's own honeſt relation, the marvel vaniſhes: he was, he ſays, ſuch "an enemy "to all conſtraint, that his maſter never could prevail "on him to learn the rules without book." He does not tell that he could not learn the rules, but that, being able to perform his exerciſes without them, and being an "enemy to conſtraint," he ſpared himſelf the labour.

Among the Engliſh poets, Cowley, Milton, and Pope, might be ſaid "to liſp in numbers;" and have given ſuch early proofs, not only of powers of language, but of comprehenſion of things, as to more tardy minds ſeems ſcarcely credible. But of the learned puerilities of Cowley there is no doubt, ſince a volume of his poems was not only written but printed in his thirteenth year; containing, with other poetical compoſitions, "The tragical Hiſtory of Pyramus and Thiſbe," written when he was ten years old; and "Conſtantia "and Philetus," written two years after.

While he was yet at ſchool he produced a comedy called "Love's Riddle," though it was not publiſhed till he had been ſome time at Cambridge. This comedy is of the paſtoral kind, which requires no acquaintance with the living world, and therefore the time at which it was compoſed adds little to the wonders of Cowley's minority.

In 1636, he was removed to Cambridge, where he continued his ſtudies with great intenſeneſs; for he is ſaid to have written, while he was yet a young ſtudent, the greater part of his "Davideis;" a work of which the materials could not have been collected without the

ſtudy of many years, but by a mind of the greateſt vigour and activity.

Two years after his ſettlement at Cambridge he publiſhed "Love's Riddle," with a poetical dedication to Sir Kenelm Digby; of whoſe acquaintance all his contemporaries ſeem to have been ambitious; and "Naufragium Joculare," a comedy written in Latin, but without due attention to the ancient models; for it is not looſe verſe, but mere proſe. It was printed, with a dedication in verſe to Dr. Comber, maſter of the college; but having neither the facility of a popular nor the accuracy of a learned work, it ſeems to be now univerſally neglected.

At the beginning of the civil war, as the Prince paſſed through Cambridge in his way to York, he was entertained with a repreſentation of the "Guardian," a comedy, which Cowley ſays was neither written nor acted, but rough-drawn by him, and repeated by the ſcholars. That this comedy was printed during his abſence from his country, he appears to have conſidered as injurious to his reputation; though, during the ſuppreſſion of the theatres, it was ſometimes privately acted with ſufficient approbation.

In 1643, being now maſter of arts, he was, by the prevalence of the parliament, ejected from Cambridge, and ſheltered himſelf at St. John's College in Oxford; where, as is ſaid by Wood, he publiſhed a ſatire, called "The Puritan and Papiſt," which was only inſerted in the laſt collection of his works; and ſo diſtinguiſhed himſelf by the warmth of his loyalty, and the elegance of his converſation, that he gained the kindneſs and confidence of thoſe who attended the King, and amongſt others of Lord Falkland, whoſe notice caſt a luſtre on all to whom it was extended.

About

About the time when Oxford was ſurrendered to the parliament, he followed the Queen to Paris, where he became ſecretary to the Lord Jermin, afterwards Earl of St. Albans, and was employed in ſuch correſpondence as the royal cauſe required, and particularly in cyphering and decyphering the letters that paſſed between the King and Queen; an employment of the higheſt confidence and honour. So wide was his province of intelligence, that, for ſeveral years, it filled all his days and two or three nights in the week.

In the year 1647, his "Miſtreſs" was publiſhed; for he imagined, as he declared in his preface to a ſubſequent edition, that "poets are ſcarce thought "freemen of their company without paying ſome du-"ties, or obliging themſelves to be true to Love."

This obligation to amorous ditties owes, I believe, its original to the fame of Petrarch, who, in an age rude and uncultivated, by his tuneful homage to his Laura, refined the manners of the lettered world, and filled Europe with love and poetry. But the baſis of all excellence is truth: he that profeſſes love ought to feel its power. Petrarch was a real lover, and Laura doubtleſs deſerved his tenderneſs. Of Cowley, we are told by Barnes *, who had means enough of information, that, whatever he may talk of his own inflammability, and the variety of characters by which his heart was divided, he in reality was in love but once, and then never had reſolution to tell his paſſion.

This conſideration cannot but abate, in ſome meaſure, the reader's eſteem for the work and the author. To love excellence, is natural; it is natural likewiſe for the lover to ſolicit reciprocal regard by an elabo-

* Barneſii Anacreontem. Orig. edit.

rate

rate diſplay of his own qualifications. The deſire of pleaſing has in different men produced actions of heroiſm, and effuſions of wit; but it ſeems as reaſonable to appear the champion as the poet of an "airy no-"thing," and to quarrel as to write for what Cowley might have learned from his maſter Pindar to call the "dream of a ſhadow."

It is ſurely not difficult, in the ſolitude of a college, or in the buſtle of the world, to find uſeful ſtudies and ſerious employment. No man needs to be ſo burthened with life as to ſquander it in voluntary dreams of fictitious occurrences. The man that ſits down to ſuppoſe himſelf charged with treaſon or peculation, and heats his mind to an elaborate purgation of his character from crimes which he was never within the poſſibility of committing, differs only by the infrequency of his folly from him who praiſes beauty which he never ſaw; complains of jealouſy which he never felt; ſuppoſes himſelf ſometimes invited, and ſometimes forſaken; fatigues his fancy, and ranſacks his memory, for images which may exhibit the gaiety of hope, or the gloomineſs of deſpair, and dreſſes his imaginary Chloris or Phyllis ſometimes in flowers fading as her beauty, and ſometimes in gems laſting as her virtues.

At Paris, as ſecretary to Lord Jermin, he was engaged in tranſacting things of real importance with real men and real women, and at that time did not much employ his thoughts upon phantoms of gallantry. Some of his letters to Mr. Bennet, afterwards Earl of Arlington, from April to December in 1650, are preſerved in "Miſcellanea Aulica," a collection of papers publiſhed by Brown. Theſe letters, being written like thoſe of other men whoſe mind is more

on

on things than words, contribute no otherwiſe to his reputation than as they ſhew him to have been above the affectation of unſeaſonable elegance, and to have known that the buſineſs of a ſtateſman can be little forwarded by flowers of rhetorick.

One paſſage, however, ſeems not unworthy of ſome notice. Speaking of the Scotch treaty then in agitation:

"The Scotch treaty," ſays he, "is the only thing "now in which we are vitally concerned; I am one of "the laſt hopers, and yet cannot now abſtain from "believing, that an agreement will be made: all peo- "ple upon the place incline to that of union. The "Scotch will moderate ſomething of the rigour of "their demands; the mutual neceſſity of an accord is "viſible, the King is perſuaded of it. And to tell "you the truth (which I take to be an argument above "all the reſt) Virgil has told the ſame thing to that "purpoſe."

This expreſſion from a ſecretary of the preſent time, would be conſidered as merely ludicrous, or at moſt as an oſtentatious diſplay of ſcholarſhip; but the manners of that time were ſo tinged with ſuperſtition, that I cannot but ſuſpect Cowley of having conſulted on this great occaſion the Virgilian lots *, and to have given ſome credit to the anſwer of his oracle.

Some

* Conſulting the Virgilian Lots, Sortes Virgilianæ, is a method of Divination by the opening of Virgil, and applying to the circumſtances of the peruſer the firſt paſſage in either of the two pages that he accidentally fixes his eye on. It is ſaid, that king Charles I. and lord Falkland, being in the Bodleian library, made this experiment of their future fortunes, and met with paſſages equally ominous to each. That of the king was the following:

Some years afterwards, "buſineſs," ſays Sprat, "paſſed of courſe into other hands;" and Cowley, being

At bello audacis populi vexatus & armis,
Finibus extoris, complexu avulſus Iuli,
Auxilium imploret, videatque indigna ſuorum
Funera, nec, cum ſe ſub leges pacis iniquæ
Tradiderit, regno aut optata luce fruatur:
Sed cadat ante diem, mediaque inhumatus arena.

Æneid, book IV. line 615.

Yet let a race untam'd, and haughty foes,
His peaceful entrance with dire arms oppoſe,
Oppreſs'd with numbers in th' unequal field,
His men diſcourag'd, and himſelf expell'd:
Let him for ſuccour ſue from place to place,
Torn from his ſubjects and his ſon's embrace.
Firſt let him ſee his friends in battle ſlain,
And their untimely fate lament in vain:
And when, at length, the cruel war ſhall ceaſe,
On hard conditions may he buy his peace;
Nor let him then enjoy ſupreme command,
But fall untimely by ſome hoſtile hand,
And lie unbury'd on the barren ſand.

DRYDEN.

Lord FALKLAND's:

Non hæc, O Palla, dederas promiſſa parenti,
Cautius ut ſævo velles te credere Marti.
Haud ignarus eram, quantum nova gloria in armis,
Et prædulce decus primo certamine poſſet.
Primitiæ juvenis miſeræ, bellique propinqui
Dura rudimenta, & nulli exaudita Deorum,
Vota precesque meæ!

Æneid, book XI. line 152.

O Pallas, thou haſt fail'd thy plighted word,
To fight with caution, not to tempt the ſword;
I warn'd thee, but in vain, for well I knew
What perils youthful ardour would purſue;
That boiling blood wou'd carry thee too far,
Young as thou wert to dangers raw, to war.

O curſt

being no longer uſeful at Paris, was in 1656 ſent back into England, that, "under pretence of privacy and "retirement, he might take occaſion of giving notice "of the poſture of things in this nation."

Soon after his return to London, he was ſeized by ſome meſſengers of the uſurping powers, who were ſent out in queſt of another man; and being examined, was put into confinement, from which he was not diſmiſſed without the ſecurity of a thouſand pounds given by Dr. Scarborough.

This year he publiſhed his poems, with a preface, in which he ſeems to have inſerted ſomething, ſuppreſſed in ſubſequent editions, which was interpreted to denote ſome relaxation of his loyalty. In this preface he declares, that "his deſire had been for ſome "days paſt, and did ſtill very vehemently continue, "to retire himſelf to ſome of the American planta-"tions, and to forſake this world for ever."

From the obloquy which the appearance of ſubmiſſion to the uſurpers brought upon him, his biographer has been very diligent to clear him, and indeed it does not ſeem to have leſſened his reputation. His wiſh for retirement we can eaſily believe to be undiſſembled; a man harraſſed in one kingdom, and perſecuted in another, who, after a courſe of buſineſs that employed all his days and half his nights in cyphering and decyphering, comes to his own country and ſteps

O curſt eſſay of arms, diſaſtrous doom,
Prelude of bloody fields and fights to come;
Hard elements of unauſpicious war,
Vain vows to Heav'n, and unavailing care. DRYDEN.

Hoffman, in his Lexicon, gives a very ſatisfactory account of this practice of ſeeking fates in books: and ſays, that it was uſed by the Pagans, the Jewiſh Rabbins, and even the early Chriſtians; the latter taking the New Teſtament for their oracle.

into a priſon, will be willing enough to retire to ſome place of quiet, and of ſafety. Yet let neither our reverence for a genius, nor our pity for a ſufferer, diſpoſe us to forget that, if his activity was virtue, his retreat was cowardice.

He then took upon himſelf the character of Phyſician, ſtill, according to Sprat, with intention "to "diſſemble the main deſign of his coming over," and, as Mr. Wood relates, "complying with the men "then in power (which was much taken notice of by "the royal party), he obtained an order to be created "Doctor of Phyſick, which being done to his mind "(whereby he gained the ill-will of ſome of his "friends), he went into France again, having made a "copy of verſes on Oliver's death."

This is no favourable repreſentation, yet even in this not much wrong can be diſcovered. How far he complied with the men in power, is to be enquired before he can be blamed. It is not ſaid that he told them any ſecrets, or aſſiſted them by intelligence, or any other act. If he only promiſed to be quiet, that they in whoſe hands he was might free him from confinement, he did what no law of ſociety prohibits.

The man whoſe miſcarriage in a juſt cauſe has put him in the power of his enemy may, without any violation of his integrity, regain his liberty, or preſerve his life, by a promiſe of neutrality: for the ſtipulation gives the enemy nothing which he had not before; the neutrality of a captive may be always ſecured by his impriſonment or death. He that is at the diſpoſal of another, may not promiſe to aid him in any injurious act, becauſe no power can compel active obedience. He may engage to do nothing, but not to do ill.

There

There is reaſon to think that Cowley promiſed little. It does not appear that his compliance gained him confidence enough to be truſted without ſecurity, for the bond of his bail was never cancelled; nor that it made him think himſelf ſecure, for at that diſſolution of government, which followed the death of Oliver, he returned into France, where he reſumed his former ſtation, and ſtaid till the Reſtoration.

"He continued," ſays his biographer, "under "theſe bonds till the general deliverance;" it is therefore to be ſuppoſed, that he did not go to France, and act again for the King without the conſent of his bondſman; that he did not ſhew his loyalty at the hazard of his friend, but by his friend's permiſſion.

Of the verſes on Oliver's death, in which Wood's narrative ſeems to imply ſomething encomiaſtick, there has been no appearance. There is a diſcourſe concerning his government, indeed, with verſes intermixed, but ſuch as certainly gained its author no friends among the abettors of uſurpation.

A doctor of phyſick however he was made at Oxford, in December 1657; and in the commencement of the Royal Society, of which an account has been publiſhed by Dr. Birch, he appears buſy among the experimental philoſophers with the title of Doctor Cowley.

There is no reaſon for ſuppoſing that he ever attempted practice; but his preparatory ſtudies have contributed ſomething to the honour of his country. Conſidering Botany as neceſſary to a phyſician, he retired into Kent to gather plants; and as the predominance of a favourite ſtudy affects all ſubordinate operations of the intellect, Botany in the mind of Cowley turned into Poetry. He compoſed in Latin ſeveral books

books on Plants, of which the firſt and ſecond diſplay the qualities of Herbs, in elegiac verſe; the third and fourth the beauties of Flowers in various meaſures; and in the fifth and ſixth, the uſes of trees in heroick numbers.

At the ſame time were produced from the ſame univerſity, the two great Poets, Cowley and Milton, of diſſimilar genius, of oppoſite principles; but concurring in the cultivation of Latin poetry, in which the Engliſh, till their works and May's poem appeared *, ſeemed unable to conteſt the palm with any other of the lettered nations.

If the Latin performances of Cowley and Milton be compared, for May I hold to be ſuperior to both, the advantage ſeems to lie on the ſide of Cowley. Milton is generally content to expreſs the thoughts of the ancients in their language; Cowley, without much loſs of purity or elegance, accommodates the diction of Rome to his own conceptions.

At the Reſtoration, after all the diligence of his long ſervice, and with conſciouſneſs not only of the merit of fidelity, but of the dignity of great abilities, he naturally expected ample preferments; and that he might not be forgotten by his own fault, wrote a Song of Triumph. But this was a time of ſuch general hope, that great numbers were inevitably diſappointed; and Cowley found his reward very tediouſly delayed. He had been promiſed by both Charles the firſt and ſecond

* By May's Poem, we are here to underſtand a continuation of Lucan's Pharſalia to the death of Julius Cæſar, by Thomas May an eminent poet and hiſtorian, who flouriſhed in the reigns of James and Charles I, and of whom a life is given in the Biographia Britannica.

the

the Maſterſhip of the Savoy; "but he loſt it," ſays Wood, "by certain perſons, enemies to the Muſes."

The neglect of the court was not his only mortification; having, by ſuch alteration as he thought proper, fitted his old Comedy of the "Guardian" for the ſtage, he produced it to the public under the title of "The "Cutter of Coleman-ſtreet *." It was treated on the ſtage with great ſeverity, and was afterwards cenſured as a ſatire on the king's party.

Mr. Dryden, who went with Mr. Sprat to the firſt exhibition, related to Mr. Dennis, "that when they "told Cowley, how little favour had been ſhewn him, "he received the news of his ill ſucceſs, not with ſo "much firmneſs as might have been expected from ſo "great a man."

What firmneſs they expected, or what weakneſs Cowley diſcovered, cannot be known. He that miſſes his end will never be as much pleaſed as he that attains it, even when he can impute no part of his failure to himſelf; and when the end is to pleaſe the multitude, no man, perhaps, has a right, in things admitting of gradation and compariſon, to throw the whole blame upon his judges, and totally to exclude diffidence and ſhame by a haughty conſciouſneſs of his own excellence.

For the rejection of this play, it is difficult now to find the reaſon: it certainly has, in a very great degree, the power of fixing attention and exciting merri-

* Here is an error in the deſignation of this comedy, which our author copied from the title-page of the latter editions of Cowley's works: the title of the play itſelf, is, without the article, "Cutter of "Coleman-ſtreet," and that, becauſe a merry ſharking fellow about the town, named Cutter, is a principal character in it.

ment *. From the charge of diſaffection he exculpates himſelf in his preface, by obſerving how unlikely it is that, having followed the royal family through all their diſtreſſes, "he ſhould chuſe the time of their re-"ſtoration to begin a quarrel with them." It appears, however, from the Theatrical Regiſter of Downes the Prompter, to have been popularly conſidered as a ſatire on the royaliſts.

That he might ſhorten this tedious ſuſpenſe, he publiſhed his pretenſions and his diſcontent, in an ode called "The Complaint;" in which he ſtyles himſelf

* Its merit, in the opinion of Dr. Johnſon, conſiſted greatly in an exact diſcrimination of a variety of new characters, and in the pointed ridicule of puritanical manners therein diſplayed. I have heard him, with great delight, refer to the following dialogue of Cutter and Mrs. Tabitha.

CUT. They [miracles] are not ceas'd, brother, nor ſhall they ceaſe till the monarchy be eſtabliſhed.

I ſay again, I am to return, and to return upon a purple dromedary, which ſignifies magiſtracy, with an axe in my hand that is called reformation, and I am to ſtrike with that axe upon the gate of Weſtminſter hall, and cry, Down Babylon, and the building called Weſtminſter hall is to run away, and caſt itſelf into the river, and then major general Harriſon is to come in green ſleeves from the North, upon a ſky-coloured mule, which ſignifies heavenly inſtruction.

TAB. O the father! He's as full of myſteries as an egg is full of meat.

CUT. And he is to have a trumpet in his mouth as big as a ſteeple, and at the ſounding of that trumpet all the churches in London are to fall down.

WIL. Oh ſtrange, what times ſhall we ſee here in poor England!

CUT. And then Venner ſhall march up to us from the Weſt, in the figure of a wave of the ſea, holding in his hand a ſhip that ſhall be called the ark of the reformed.

An admirable example of this kind of ſatire, levelled as it ſeems, againſt Prynne's book, "The Unlovelineſs of Love-locks," may be ſeen in the City Match, a comedy by Dr. Jaſper Mayne, Act II.

the

the *melancholy* Cowley. This met with the uſual fortune of complaints, and ſeems to have excited more contempt than pity.

Theſe unlucky incidents are brought, maliciouſly enough, together in ſome ſtanzas, written about that time, on the choice of a laureat; a mode of ſatire, by which, ſince it was firſt introduced by Suckling, perhaps every generation of poets has been teazed:

Savoy-miſſing Cowley came into the court,
Making apologies for his bad play;
Every one gave him ſo good a report,
That Apollo gave heed to all he could ſay:
Nor would he have had, 'tis thought, a rebuke,
Unleſs he had done ſome notable folly;
Writ verſes unjuſtly in praiſe of Sam Tuke,
Or printed his pitiful Melancholy.

His vehement deſire of retirement now came again upon him. "Not finding," ſays the moroſe Wood, "that preferment conferred upon him which he ex-"pected, while others for their money carried away "moſt places, he retired diſcontented into Surrey."

"He was now," ſays the courtly Sprat, "weary of "the vexations and formalities of an active condition. "He had been perplexed with a long compliance to fo-"reign manners. He was ſatiated with the arts of a "court; which ſort of life, though his virtue made "it innocent to him, yet nothing could make it quiet. "Thoſe were the reaſons that made him to follow the "violent inclination of his own mind, which, in the "greateſt throng of his former buſineſs, had ſtill called "upon him, and repreſented to him the true delights "of ſolitary ſtudies, of temperate pleaſures, and a

"moderate revenue below the malice and flatteries of "fortune."

So differently are things ſeen, and ſo differently are they ſhown; but actions are viſible, though motives are ſecret. Cowley certainly retired; firſt to Barn-elms, and afterwards to Chertſey, in Surry. He ſeems, however, to have loſt part of his dread of the * *hum of men*. He thought himſelf now ſafe enough from intruſion, without the defence of mountains and oceans; and, inſtead of ſeeking ſhelter in America, wiſely went only ſo far from the buſtle of life as that he might eaſily find his way back, when ſolitude ſhould grow tedious. His retreat was at firſt but ſlenderly accommodated; yet he ſoon obtained, by the intereſt of the earl of St. Albans and the duke of Buckingham, ſuch a leaſe of the Queen's lands as afforded him an ample income.

By the lover of virtue and of wit it will be ſolicitouſly aſked, if he now was happy. Let them peruſe one of his letters accidentally preſerved by Peck, which I recommend to the conſideration of all that may hereafter pant for ſolitude.

"To Dr. Thomas Sprat.

"Chertſey, 21 May, 1665.

"The firſt night that I came hither I caught ſo "great a cold, with a defluction of rheum, as made me "keep my chamber ten days. And, two after, had "ſuch a bruiſe on my ribs with a fall, that I am yet "unable to move or turn myſelf in my bed. This "is my perſonal fortune here to begin with. And, be-

* L'Allegro of Milton. Orig. edit.

"ſides,

"ſides, I can get no money from my tenants, and "have my meadows eaten up every night by cattle put "in by my neighbours. What this ſignifies, or may "come to in time, God knows; if it be ominous, it "can end in nothing leſs than hanging. Another mis-"fortune has been, and ſtranger than all the reſt, that "you have broke your word with me, and failed to "come, even though you told Mr. Bois that you "would. This is what they call *Monſtri ſimile.* I do "hope to recover my late hurt ſo farre within five or "ſix days (though it be uncertain yet whether I ſhall "ever recover it) as to walk about again. And then, "methinks, you and I and *the Dean* might be very "merry upon S. Anne's Hill. You might very con-"veniently come hither the way of Hampton Town, "lying there one night. I write this in pain, and "can ſay no more: *Verbum ſapienti.*"

He did not long enjoy the pleaſure or ſuffer the uneaſineſs of ſolitude; for he died at the Porch-houſe * in Chertſey in 1667, in the 49th year of his age.

He was buried with great pomp near Chaucer and Spenſer; and king Charles pronounced, "That Mr. "Cowley had not left behind him a better man in "England." He is repreſented by Dr. Sprat as the moſt amiable of mankind; and this poſthumous praiſe may ſafely be credited, as it has never been contradicted by envy or by faction.

Such are the remarks and memorials which I have been able to add to the narrative of Dr. Sprat; who, writing when the feuds of the civil war were yet

* Now in the poſſeſſion of Mr. Clark, Alderman of London. Orig. edit.

recent, and the minds of either party were eaſily irritated, was obliged to paſs over many tranſactions in general expreſſions, and to leave curioſity often unſatisfied. What he did not tell, cannot however now be known. I muſt therefore recommend the peruſal of his work, to which my narration can be conſidered as a ſlender ſupplement.

COWLEY, like other poets who have written with narrow views, and, inſtead of tracing intellectual pleaſures in the minds of man, paid their court to temporary prejudices, has been at one time much praiſed and too much neglected at another.

Wit, like all other things ſubject by their nature to the choice of man, has its changes and faſhions, and at different times takes different forms. About the beginning of the ſeventeenth century appeared a race of writers that may be termed the metaphyſical poets; of whom, in a criticiſm on the works of Cowley, it is not improper to give ſome account.

The metaphyſical poets were men of learning, and to ſhew their learning was their whole endeavour; but unluckily reſolving to ſhew it in rhyme, inſtead of writing poetry they only wrote verſes, and very often ſuch verſes as ſtood the trial of the finger better than of the ear; for the modulation was ſo imperfect, that they were only found to be verſes by counting the ſyllables.

If the father of criticiſm has rightly denominated poetry τέχνη μιμητική, *an imitative art*, theſe writers will, without great wrong, loſe their right to the name of poets; for they cannot be ſaid to have imitated any thing; they neither copied nature nor life; neither painted

painted the forms of matter, nor repreſented the operations of intellect.

Thoſe however who deny them to be poets, allow them to be wits. Dryden confeſſes of himſelf and his contemporaries, that they fall below Donne in wit, but maintains that they ſurpaſs him in poetry.

If Wit be well deſcribed by Pope, as being, "that "which has been often thought, but was never before ſo "well expreſſed," they certainly never attained, nor ever ſought it; for they endeavoured to be ſingular in their thoughts, and were careleſs of their diction. But Pope's account of wit is undoubtedly erroneous: he depreſſes it below its natural dignity, and reduces it from ſtrength of thought to happineſs of language.

If by a more noble and more adequate conception that be conſidered as Wit, which is at once natural and new, that which, though not obvious, is, upon its firſt production, acknowledged to be juſt; if it be that, which he that never found it wonders how he miſſed; to wit of this kind the metaphyſical poets have ſeldom riſen. Their thoughts are often new, but ſeldom natural; they are not obvious, but neither are they juſt; and the reader, far from wondering that he miſſed them, wonders more frequently by what perverſeneſs of induſtry they were ever found.

But Wit, abſtracted from its effects upon the hearer, may be more rigorouſly and philoſophically conſidered as a kind of *diſcordia concors*; a combination of diſſimilar images, or diſcovery of occult reſemblances in things apparently unlike. Of wit, thus defined, they have more than enough. The moſt heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together; nature and art are ranſacked for illuſtrations, compariſons, and alluſions; their learn-

ing inſtructs, and their ſubtility ſurpriſes; but the reader commonly thinks his improvement dearly bought, and, though he ſometimes admires, is ſeldom pleaſed.

From this account of their compoſitions it will be readily inferred, that they were not ſucceſsful in repreſenting or moving the affections. As they were wholly employed on ſomething unexpected and ſurpriſing, they had no regard to that uniformity of ſentiment which enables us to conceive and to excite the pains and the pleaſure of other minds: they never enquired what, on any occaſion, they ſhould have ſaid or done; but wrote rather as beholders than partakers of human nature; as beings looking upon good and evil, impaſſive and at leiſure; as Epicurean deities making remarks on the actions of men, and the viciſſitudes of life, without intereſt and without emotion. Their courtſhip was void of fondneſs, and their lamentation of ſorrow. Their wiſh was only to ſay what they hoped had been never ſaid before.

Nor was the ſublime more within their reach than the pathetick; for they never attempted that comprehenſion and expanſe of thought which at once fills the whole mind, and of which the firſt effect is ſudden aſtoniſhment, and the ſecond rational admiration. Sublimity is produced by aggregation, and littleneſs by diſperſion. Great thoughts are always general, and conſiſt in poſitions not limited by exceptions, and in deſcriptions not deſcending to minuteneſs. It is with great propriety that Subtlety, which in its original import means exility of particles, is taken in its metaphorical meaning for nicety of diſtinction. Thoſe writers who lay on the watch for novelty could have little hope of greatneſs; for great things cannot have eſcaped former

mer obſervation. Their attempts were always analytick; they broke every image into fragments; and could no more repreſent, by their ſlender conceits and laboured particularities, the proſpects of nature, or the ſcenes of life, than he, who diſſects a ſun-beam with a priſm, can exhibit the wide effulgence of a ſummer noon.

What they wanted however of the ſublime, they endeavoured to ſupply by hyperbole; their amplification had no limits; they left not only reaſon but fancy behind them; and produced combinations of confuſed magnificence, that not only could not be credited, but could not be imagined.

Yet great labour, directed by great abilities, is never wholly loſt: if they frequently threw away their wit upon falſe conceits, they likewiſe ſometimes ſtruck out unexpected truth: if their conceits were far-fetched, they were often worth the carriage. To write on their plan, it was at leaſt neceſſary to read and think. No man could be born a metaphyſical poet, nor aſſume the dignity of a writer, by deſcriptions copied from deſcriptions, by imitations borrowed from imitations, by traditional imagery, and hereditary ſimilies, by readineſs of rhyme, and volubility of ſyllables.

In peruſing the works of this race of authors, the mind is exerciſed either by recollection or inquiry; either ſomething already learned is to be retrieved, or ſomething new is to be examined. If their greatneſs ſeldom elevates, their acuteneſs often ſurpriſes; if the imagination is not always gratified, at leaſt the powers of reflection and compariſon are employed; and in the maſs of materials which ingenious abſurdity has thrown together, genuine wit and uſeful knowledge may be ſometimes found, buried perhaps in groſſneſs of expreſſion,

but

but uſeful to thoſe who know their value; and ſuch a when they are expanded to perſpicuity, and poliſhed t elegance, may give luſtre to works which have mo propriety though leſs copiouſneſs of ſentiment.

This kind of writing, which was, I believe, borrowe from Marino and his followers, had been recommende by the example of Donne, a man of a very extenſiv and various knowledge; and by Jonſon, whoſe manne reſembled that of Donne more in the ruggedneſs of hi lines than in the caſt of his ſentiments.

When their reputation was high, they had undoubt edly more imitators, than time has left behind. Thei immediate ſucceſſors, of whom any remembrance ca be ſaid to remain, were Suckling, Waller, Denham Cowley, Cleiveland, and Milton. Denham and Walle ſought another way to fame, by improving the harmon of our numbers. Milton tried the metaphyſick ſtyl only in his lines upon Hobſon the Carrier. Cowle adopted it, and excelled his predeceſſors, having a much ſentiment, and more muſick. Suckling neithe improved verſification, nor abounded in conceits. Th faſhionable ſtyle remained chiefly with Cowley; Suck ling could not reach it, and Milton diſdained it.

CRITICAL REMARKS are not eaſily underſtood with out examples; and I have therefore collected inſtance of the modes of writing by which this ſpecies of poet for poets they were called by themſelves and their ad mirers, was eminently diſtinguiſhed.

AS the authors of this race were perhaps more deſi rous of being admired than underſtood, they ſome times drew their conceits from receſſes of learning ne

ver

very much frequented by common readers of poetry. Thus Cowley on *Knowledge:*

The ſacred tree midſt the fair orchard grew;
The phœnix Truth did on it reſt,
And built his perfum'd neſt,
That right Porphyrian tree which did true logic ſhew.
Each leaf did learned notions give,
And th' apples were demonſtrative:
So clear their colour and divine,
The very ſhade they caſt did other lights outſhine.

On Anacreon continuing a lover in his old age:

Love was with thy life entwin'd,
Cloſe as heat with fire is join'd,
A powerful brand preſcrib'd the date
Of thine, like Meleager's fate.
Th' antiperiſtaſis of age
More enflam'd thy amorous rage.

In the following verſes we have an alluſion to a Rabbinical opinion concerning Manna:

Variety I aſk not: give me one
To live perpetually upon.
The perſon Love does to us fit,
Like manna, has the taſte of all in it.

Thus *Donne* ſhews his medicinal knowledge in ſome encomiaſtic verſes:

In every thing there naturally grows
A Balſamum to keep it freſh and new,
If 'twere not injur'd by extrinſique blows;
Your youth and beauty are this balm in you.
But you, of learning and religion,
And virtue and ſuch ingredients, have made
A mithridate, whoſe operation
Keeps off, or cures what can be done or ſaid.

Though

Though the following lines of Donne, on the laſt night of the year, have ſomething in them too ſcholaſtic, they are not inelegant:

This twilight of two years, not paſt nor next,
Some emblem is of me, or I of this.
Who, meteor-like, of ſtuff and form perplext,
Whoſe what and where in diſputation is,
If I ſhould call me any thing, ſhould miſs.
I ſum the years and me, and find me not
Debtor to th' old, nor creditor to th' new,
That cannot ſay, my thanks I have forgot,
Nor truſt I this with hopes; and yet ſcarce true
This bravery is, ſince theſe times ſhew'd me you.

DONNE.

Yet more abſtruſe and profound is *Donne's* reflection upon Man as a Microcoſm:

If men be worlds, there is in every one
Something to anſwer in ſome proportion
All the world's riches: and in good men, this
Virtue, our form's form, and our ſoul's ſoul is.

OF thoughts ſo far fetched, as to be not only unexpected, but unnatural, all their books are full.

To a Lady, who wrote poeſies for rings.

They, who above do various circles find,
Say, like a ring th' æquator heaven does bind.
When heaven ſhall be adorn'd by thee,
(Which then more heaven than 'tis, will be)
'Tis thou muſt write the poeſy there,
For it wanteth one as yet,
Then the ſun paſs through't twice a year,
The ſun, which is eſteem'd the god of wit.

COWLEY.

The difficulties which have been raiſed about identity in philoſophy, are by Cowley with ſtill more perplexity applied to Love:

Five years ago (ſays ſtory) I lov'd you,
For which you call me moſt inconſtant now;
Pardon me, madam, you miſtake the man;
For I am not the ſame that I was then;
No fleſh is now the ſame 'twas then in me,
And that my mind is chang'd yourſelf may ſee.
The ſame thoughts to retain ſtill, and intents,
Were more inconſtant far; for accidents
Muſt of all things moſt ſtrangely inconſtant prove,
If from one ſubject they t' another move:
My members then, the father members were
From whence theſe take their birth, which now are here.
If then this body love what th' other did,
'Twere inceſt, which by nature is forbid.

The love of different women is, in geographical poetry, compared to travels through different countries:

Haſt thou not found, each woman's breaſt
(The land where thou haſt travelled)
Either by ſavages poſſeſt,
Or wild, and uninhabited?
What joy could'ſt take, or what repoſe,
In countries ſo uncivilis'd as thoſe?
Luſt, the ſcorching dog-ſtar, here
Rages with immoderate heat;
Whilſt Pride, the rugged Northern Bear,
In others makes the cold too great.
And where theſe are temperate known,
The ſoil's all barren ſand, or rocky ſtone.

COWLEY.

A lover, burnt up by his affection, is compared to Egypt:

The fate of Egypt I ſuſtain,
And never feel the dew of rain
From clouds which in the head appear;
But all my too much moiſture owe
To overflowings of the heart below.

COWLEY.

The lover ſuppoſes his lady acquainted with the ancient laws of augury and rites of ſacrifice:

And yet this death of mine, I fear,
Will ominous to her appear:
When found in every other part,
Her ſacrifice is found without an heart.
For the laſt tempeſt of my death
Shall ſigh out that too, with my breath.

That the chaos was harmoniſed, has been recited of old; but whence the different ſounds aroſe, remained for a modern to diſcover:

Th' ungovern'd parts no correſpondence knew,
An artleſs war from thwarting motions grew;
Till they to number and fixt rules were brought.
Water and air he for the Tenor choſe,
Earth made the Baſe; the Treble, flame aroſe *.

COWLEY.

The tears of lovers are always of great poetical account; but Donne has extended them into worlds. If the lines are not eaſily underſtood, they may be read again.

On a round ball
A workman, that hath copies by, can lay
An Europe, Afric, and an Aſia,
And quickly make that, which was nothing, all.

* Cowley appears, by theſe lines, to have been but little ſkilled in muſic. Not to ſpeak of the ſentiment, had he reſembled water alone to the tenor, and air to the contra-tenor, the analogy had been juſt,

So doth each tear,
Which thee doth wear,
A globe, yea world, by that impreſſion grow,
Till thy tears mixt with mine do overflow
This world, by waters ſent from thee my heaven diſ-
ſolved ſo.

On reading the following lines, the reader may perhaps cry out—*Confuſion worſe confounded.*

Here lies a ſhe ſun, and a he moon here
She gives the beſt light to his ſphere,
Or each is both, and all, and ſo
They unto one another nothing owe.

DONNE.

Who but Donne would have thought that a good man is a teleſcope?

Though God be our true glaſs, through which we ſee
All, ſince the being of all things is he,
Yet are the trunks, which do to us derive
Things in proportion fit, by perſpective
Deeds of good men; for by their living here,
Virtues, indeed remote, ſeem to be near.

Who would imagine it poſſible that in a very few lines ſo many remote ideas could be brought together:

Since 'tis my doom, Love's underſhrieve,
Why this reprieve?
Why doth my She Advowſon fly
Incumbency?
To ſell thyſelf doſt thou intend
By candle's end,
And hold the contraſt thus in doubt,
Life's taper out?
Think but how ſoon the market fails,
Your ſex lives faſter than the males;
And if to meaſure age's ſpan,

The

That pain muſt needs be very much,
Which makes me of your hand afraid.
Cordials of pity give me now,
For I too weak of purgings grow.

COWLEY.

The World and a Clock.

Mahol, th' inferior world's fantaſtic face,
Thro' all the turns of matter's maze did trace;
Great Nature's well-ſet clock in pieces took;
On all the ſprings and ſmalleſt wheels did look
Of life and motion, and with equal art
Made up the whole again of every part.

COWLEY.

A coal-pit has not often found its poet; but that may not want its due honour, Cleiveland has parallel it with the Sun:

The moderate value of our guiltleſs ore
Makes no man atheiſt, and no woman whore;
Yet why ſhould hallow'd veſtal's ſacred ſhrine
Deſerve more honour than a flaming mine?
Theſe pregnant wombs of heat would fitter be
Than a few embers, for a deity.
Had he our pits, the Perſian would admire
No ſun, but warmth's devotion at our fire:
He'd leave the trotting whipſter, and prefer
Our profound Vulcan 'bove that waggoner.
For wants he heat, or light? or would have ſtore
Or both? 'tis here: and what can ſuns give more?
Nay, what's the ſun but, in a different name,
A coal-pit rampant, or a mine on flame!
Then let this truth reciprocally run,
The ſun's heaven's coalery, and coals our ſun.

Death, a Voyage:

No family
Ere rigg'd a ſoul for heaven's diſcovery,

With whom more venturers might boldly dare
Venture their ſtakes, with him in joy to ſhare.

DONNE.

Their thoughts and expreſſions were ſometimes groſsly abſurd, and ſuch as no figures or licence can reconcile to the underſtanding.

A Lover neither dead nor alive;

Then down I laid my head
Down on cold earth; and for a while was dead,
And my freed ſoul to a ſtrange ſomewhere fled:
Ah, ſottiſh ſoul, ſaid I,
When back to its cage again I ſaw it fly:
Fool to reſume her broken chain!
And row her galley here again!
Fool, to that body to return
Where it condemn'd and deſtin'd is to burn!
Once dead, how can it be,
Death ſhould a thing ſo pleaſant ſeem to thee,
That thou ſhouldſt come to live it o'er again in me?

COWLEY.

A Lover's heart, a hand grenado.

Wo to her ſtubborn heart, if once mine come
Into the ſelf-ſame room,
'Twill tear and blow up all within,
Like a grenado ſhot into a magazin.
Then ſhall Love keep the aſhes, and torn parts,
Of both our broken hearts:
Shall out of both one new one make;
From her's th' allay, from mine, the metal take.

COWLEY.

The poetical Propagation of Light:

The Prince's favour is diffus'd o'er all,
From which all fortunes, names, and natures fall;
Then from thoſe wombs of ſtars, the Bride's bright eyes,
At every glance a conſtellation flies

And ſowes the court with ſtars, and doth prevent
In light and power, the all-ey'd firmament:
Firſt her eye kindles other ladies' eyes,
Then from their beams their jewels luſtres riſe;
And from their jewels torches do take fire,
And all is warmth, and light, and good deſire.

DONNE

THEY were in very little care to clothe their r
tions with elegance of dreſs, and therefore miſs t
notice and the praiſe which are often gained by tho
who think leſs, but are more diligent to adorn th
thoughts.

That a miſtreſs beloved is fairer in idea than in r
ality, is by Cowley thus expreſſed:

Thou in my fancy doſt much higher ſtand,
Than women can be plac'd by Nature's hand;
And I muſt needs, I'm ſure, a loſer be,
To change thee, as thou'rt there, for very thee.

That prayer and labour ſhould co-operate, are th
taught by Donne:

In none but us, are ſuch mixt engines found,
As hands of double office; for the ground
We till with them; and them to heaven we raiſe;
Who prayerleſs labours, or without this, prays,
Doth but one half, that's none.

By the ſame author, a common topick, the dang
of procraſtination, is thus illuſtrated:

—— That which I ſhould have begun
In my youth's morning, now late muſt be done;
And I, as giddy travellers muſt do,
Which ſtray or ſleep all day, and having loſt
Light and ſtrength, dark and tir'd muſt then ride pa

All that man has to do is to live and die; the ſu
of humanity is comprehended by Donne in the fo
lowing lines:

Th

Think in how poor a priſon thou didſt lie;
After enabled but to ſuck and cry.
Think, when 'twas grown to moſt, 'twas a poor inn,
A province pack'd up in two yards of ſkin,
And that uſurp'd, or threaten'd with a rage
Of ſickneſſes, or their true mother, age.
But think that death hath now enfranchis'd thee;
Thou haſt thy expanſion now, and liberty;
Think, that a ruſty piece diſcharg'd is flown
In pieces, and the bullet is his own,
And freely flies: this to thy ſoul allow,
Think thy ſhell broke, think thy ſoul hatch'd but now.

THEY were ſometimes indelicate and diſguſting. Cowley thus apoſtrophiſes beauty:

—Thou tyrant, which leav'ſt no man free!
Thou ſubtle thief, from whom nought ſafe can be!
Thou murtherer, which haſt kill'd, and devil, which
would'ſt damn me.

Thus he addreſſes his Miſtreſs:

Thou who, in many a propriety,
So truly art the ſun to me,
Add one more likeneſs, which I'm ſure you can,
And let me and my ſun beget a man.

Thus he repreſents the meditations of a Lover:

Though in thy thoughts ſcarce any tracts have been
So much as of original ſin,
Such charms thy beauty wears as might
Deſires in dying confeſt ſaints excite.
Thou with ſtrange adultery
Doſt in each breaſt a brothel keep;
Awake, all men do luſt for thee,
And ſome enjoy thee when they ſleep.

The true taſte of Tears:

Hither with cryſtal vials, lovers, come,
And take my tears, which are love's wine,
And try your miſtreſs' tears at home;
For all are falſe, that taſte not juſt like mine.

Don-

This is yet more indelicate:

As the ſweet ſweat of roſes in a ſtill,
As that which from chaf'd muſk-cat's pores doth trill,
As the almighty balm of th' early Eaſt,
Such are the ſweet drops of my miſtreſs' breaſt.
And on her neck her ſkin ſuch luſtre ſets,
They ſeem no ſweat drops, but pearl coronets:
Rank ſweaty froth thy miſtreſs' brow defiles.

DONNE.

THEIR expreſſions ſometimes raiſe horror, when they intend perhaps to be pathetic:

As men in hell are from diſeaſes free,
So from all other ills am I,
Free from their known formality:
But all pains eminently lie in thee.

COWLEY.

THEY were not always ſtrictly curious, whether the opinions from which they drew their illuſtrations were true; it was enough that they were popular. Bacon remarks, that ſome falſehoods are continued by tradition, becauſe they ſupply commodious alluſions.

It gave a piteous groan, and ſo it broke;
In vain it ſomething would have ſpoke:
The love within too ſtrong for't was,
Like poiſon put into a Venice-glaſs.

COWLEY.

IN forming deſcriptions, they looked out not for images, but for conceits. Night has been a common ſubject, which poets have contended to adorn. Dryden's Night is well known; Donne's is as follows:

Thou feeſt me here at midnight, now all reſt.
Time's dead low-water; when all minds diveſt
To-morrow's buſineſs, when the labourers have
Such reſt in bed, that their laſt church-yard grave,
Subject to change, will ſcarce be a type of this,
Now when the client, whoſe laſt hearing is

To-

To-morrow, ſleeps; when the condemned man,
Who when he opes his eyes, muſt ſhut them then
Again by death, although ſad watch he keep,
Doth practiſe dying by a little ſleep,
Thou at this midnight ſeeſt me.

IT muſt be however confeſſed of theſe writers, that if they are upon common ſubjects often unneceſſarily and unpoetically ſubtle; yet where ſcholaſtick ſpeculation can be properly admitted, their copiouſneſs and acuteneſs may juſtly be admired. What Cowley has written upon Hope, ſhews an unequalled fertility of invention:

Hope, whoſe weak being ruin'd is,
Alike if it ſucceed, and if it miſs;
Whom good or ill does equally confound,
And both the horns of Fate's dilemma wound.
Vain ſhadow, which doſt vaniſh quite,
Both at full noon and perfect night!
The ſtars have not a poſſibility
Of bleſſing thee;
If things then from their end we happy call,
'Tis Hope is the moſt hopeleſs thing of all.
Hope, thou bold taſter of delight,
Who, whilſt thou ſhould'ſt but taſte, devour'ſt it quite!
Thou bring'ſt us an eſtate, yet leav'ſt us poor,
By clogging it with legacies before!
The joys which we entire ſhould wed,
Come deflower'd virgins to our bed;
Good fortunes without gain imported be,
Such mighty cuſtom's paid to thee:
For joy, like wine, kept cloſe does better taſte;
If it take air before, its ſpirits waſte.

To the following compariſon of a man that travels, and his wife that ſtays at home, with a pair of compaſſes, it may be doubted whether abſurdity or ingenuity has the better claim:

Our two ſouls therefore, which are one,
Though I muſt go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expanſion,
Like gold to airy thinneſs beat.
If they be two, they are two ſo
As ſtiff twin-compaſſes are two,
Thy ſoul the fixt foot, makes no ſhow
To move, but doth, if th' other do.
And though it in the centre ſit,
Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans, and hearkens after it,
And grows erect, as that comes home.
Such wilt thou be to me, who muſt
Like th' other foot obliquely run.
Thy firmneſs makes my circle juſt,
And makes me end, where I begun.

DONNE.

In all theſe examples it is apparent, that whatever is improper or vitious, is produced by a voluntary deviation from nature in purſuit of ſomething new and ſtrange; and that the writers fail to give delight, by their deſire of exciting admiration.

HAVING thus endeavoured to exhibit a general repreſentation of the ſtyle and ſentiments of the metaphyſical poets, it is now proper to examine particularly the works of Cowley, who was almoſt the laſt of that race, and undoubtedly the beſt.

His Miſcellanies contain a collection of ſhort compoſitions, written ſome as they were dictated by a mind at leiſure, and ſome as they were called forth by different occaſions; with great variety of ſtyle and ſentiment, from burleſque levity to awful grandeur. Such an advantage of diverſified excellence no other poet has yet afforded. To chooſe the beſt, among many good, is one of the moſt hazardous attempts of criticiſm.

criticiſm. I know not whether Scaliger himſelf has perſuaded many readers to join with him in his preference of the two favorite odes, which he eſtimates in his raptures at the value of a kingdom. I will however venture to recommend Cowley's firſt piece, which ought to be inſcribed *To my muſe*, for want of which the ſecond couplet is without reference. When the title is added, there will ſtill remain a defect; for every piece ought to contain in itſelf whatever is neceſſary to make it intelligible. Pope has ſome epitaphs without names; which are therefore epitaphs to be let, occupied indeed for the preſent, but hardly appropriated.

The ode on Wit is almoſt without a rival. It was about the time of Cowley that *Wit*, which had been till then uſed for *Intellection*, in contradiſtinction to *Will*, took the meaning, whatever it be, which it now bears.

Of all the paſſages in which poets have exemplified their own precepts, none will eaſily be found of greater excellence than that in which Cowley condems exuberance of Wit:

> Yet 'tis not to adorn and gild each part,
> That ſhews more coſt than art.
> Jewels at noſe and lips but ill appear;
> Rather than all things wit, let none be there.
> Several lights will not be ſeen,
> If there be nothing elſe between.
> Men doubt, becauſe they ſtand ſo thick i'th' ſky,
> If thoſe be ſtars which paint the galaxy.

In his verſes to Lord Falkland, whom every man of his time was proud to praiſe, there are, as there muſt be in all Cowley's compoſitions, ſome ſtriking thoughts; but

but they are not well wrought. His elegy on Sir Henry Wotton is vigorous and happy, the ſeries of thoughts is eaſy and natural, and the concluſion, though a little weakened by the intruſion of Alexander, is elegant and forcible.

It may be remarked, that in this Elegy, and in moſt of his encomiaſtic poems, he has forgotten or neglected to name his heroes.

In his poem on the death of Harvey, there is much praiſe, but little paſſion, a very juſt and ample delineation of ſuch virtues as a ſtudious privacy admits, and ſuch intellectual excellence as a mind not yet called forth to action can diſplay. He knew how to diſtinguiſh, and how to commend the qualities of his companion; but when he wiſhes to make us weep, he forgets to weep himſelf, and diverts his ſorrow by imagining how his crown of bays, if he had it, would *crackle* in the *fire*. It is the odd fate of this thought to be worſe for being true. The bay-leaf crackles remarkably as it burns; as therefore this property was not aſſigned it by chance, the mind muſt be thought ſufficiently at eaſe that could attend to ſuch minuteneſs of phyſiology. But the power of Cowley is not ſo much to move the affections, as to exerciſe the underſtanding.

The *Chronicle* is a compoſition unrivalled and alone: ſuch gaiety of fancy, ſuch facility of expreſſion, ſuch varied ſimilitude, ſuch a ſucceſſion of images, and ſuch a dance of words, it is vain to expect except from Cowley. His ſtrength always appears in his agility; his volatility is not the flutter of a light, but the bound of an elaſtic mind. His levity never leaves his learning behind it; the moraliſt, the politician, and the critick, mingle their influence even in this airy frolick of genius. To ſuch a performance Suckling could have brought

brought the gaiety, but not the knowledge; Dryden could have ſupplied the knowledge, but not the gaiety.

The verſes to Davenant, which are vigorouſly begun, and happily concluded, contain ſome hints of criticiſm very juſtly conceived and happily expreſſed. Cowley's critical abilities have not been ſufficiently obſerved: the few deciſions and remarks which his prefaces and his notes on the Davideis ſupply, were at that time acceſſions to Engliſh literature, and ſhew ſuch ſkill as raiſes our wiſh for more examples.

The lines from Jerſey are a very curious and pleaſing ſpecimen of the familiar deſcending to the burleſque.

His two metrical diſquiſitions *for* and *againſt* Reaſon, are no mean ſpecimens of metaphyſical poetry. The ſtanzas againſt knowledge produce little conviction. In thoſe which are intended to exalt the human faculties, Reaſon has its proper taſk aſſigned it; that of judging, not of things revealed, but of the reality of revelation. In the verſes *for* Reaſon is a paſſage which Bentley, in the only Engliſh verſes which he is known to have written, ſeems to have copied, though with the inferiority of an imitator.

The holy Book like the eighth ſphere doth ſhine
With thouſand lights of truth divine,
So numberleſs the ſtars that to our eye
It makes all but one galaxy:
Yet Reaſon muſt aſſiſt too; for in ſeas
So vaſt and dangerous as theſe,
Our courſe by ſtars above we cannot know
Without the compaſs too below.

After this ſays Bentley:

Who travels in religious jars,
Truth mix'd with error, clouds with rays,
With Whiſton wanting pyx and ſtars,
In the wide ocean ſinks or ſtrays.

Cowley ſeems to have had, what Milton is believ
to have wanted, the ſkill to rate his own performance
by their juſt value, and has therefore cloſed his Mi
cellanies with the verſes upon Craſhaw, which appa
rently excel all that have gone before them, and i
which there are beauties which common authors ma
juſtly think not only above their attainment, but abov
their ambition.

To the Miſcellanies ſucceed the *Anacreontiques*, o
paraphraſtical tranſlations of ſome little poems, whic
paſs, however juſtly, under the name of Anacreon
Of thoſe ſongs dedicated to feſtivity and gaiety, f
which even the morality is voluptuous, and whic
teach nothing but the enjoyment of the preſent da
he has given rather a pleaſing than a faithful repreſen
tation, having retained their ſpritelineſs, but loſt the
ſimplicity. The Anacreon * of Cowley, like the Hom
of Pope, has admitted the decoration of ſome moder
graces, by which he is undoubtedly more amiable t

* I have reaſon to think that Dr. Johnſon knew not that a com
plete tranſlation of Anacreon, other than the late one of Fawkes, wh
himſelf was ignorant of the fact, was extant in our language; ſuch
one, however, there is by Stanley, the author of "the Lives of t
Philoſophers, 8vo." 1654; remarkable in reſpect both of its elegan
and conciſeneſs, of which qualities the following, being the twent
ſixth ode, may ſerve as a ſpecimen:

When my ſenſe in wine I ſteep,
All my cares are lull'd aſleep;
Rich in thought, I then deſpiſe
Cræſus, and his royalties;
Whilſt with ivy twines I wreath me,
And ſing all the world beneath me;
Others run to martial fights,
I to Bacchus's delights;
Fill the cup then, boy, for I
Drunk than dead had rather lie.

commc

common readers, and perhaps, if they would honeſtly declare their own perceptions, to far the greater part of thoſe whom courteſy and ignorance are content to ſtyle the Learned.

Theſe little pieces will be found more finiſhed in their kind than any other of Cowley's works. The diction ſhews nothing of the mould of time, and the ſentiments are at no great diſtance from our preſent habitudes of thought. Real mirth muſt be always natural, and nature is uniform. Men have been wiſe in very different modes; but they have always laughed the ſame way.

Levity of thought naturally produced familiarity of language, and the familiar part of language continues long the ſame: the dialogue of comedy, when it is tranſcribed from popular manners and real life, is read from age to age with equal pleaſure. The artifices of inverſion, by which the eſtabliſhed order of words is changed, or of innovation, by which new words or new meanings of words are introduced, is practiſed, not by thoſe who talk to be underſtood, but by thoſe who write to be admired.

The Anacreontiques therefore of Cowley give now all the pleaſure which they ever gave. If he was formed by nature for one kind of writing more than for another, his power ſeems to have been greateſt in the familiar and the feſtive.

The next claſs of his poems is called *The Miſtreſs*, of which it is not neceſſary to ſelect any particular pieces for praiſe or cenſure. They have all the ſame beauties and faults, and nearly in the ſame proportion. They are written with exuberance of wit, and with copiouſneſs of learning; and it is truly aſſerted by Sprat, that the plenitude

rude of the writer's knowledge flows in u his page so that the reader is commonly ſurpriſed into ſome improvement. But, conſidered as the verſes of a lover, no man that has ever loved will much commend them. They are neither courtly nor pathetick, have neither gallantry nor fondneſs. His praiſes are too far fought, and too hyperbolical, either to expreſs love, or to excite it; every ſtanza is crouded with darts and flames, with wounds and death, with mingled ſouls, and with broken hearts.

The principal artifice by which *The Miſtreſs* is filled with conceits is very copiouſly diſplayed by Addiſon. Love is by Cowley, as by other poets, expreſſed metaphorically by flame and fire; and that which is true of real fire is ſaid of love, or figurative fire, the ſame word in the ſame ſentence retaining both ſignifications. Thus, "obſerving the cold regard of his miſtreſs's "eyes, and at the ſame time their power of producing "love in him, he conſiders them as burning glaſſes "made of ice. Finding himſelf able to live in the "greateſt extremities of love, he concludes the torrid "zone to be habitable. Upon the dying of a tree, on "which he had cut his loves, he obſerves, that his "flames had burnt up and withered the tree."

Theſe conceits Addiſon calls mixed wit; that is, wit which conſiſts of thoughts true in one ſenſe of the expreſſion, and falſe in the other. Addiſon's repreſentation is ſufficiently indulgent. That confuſion of images may entertain for a moment; but being unnatural, it ſoon grows weariſome. Cowley delighted in it, as much as if he had invented it; but, not to mention the ancients, he might have found it full-blown in modern Italy. Thus Sannazaro:

Aſpice quam variis diſtringar Leſbia curis,
Uror, & heu! noſtro manat ab igne liquor
Sum Nilus, ſumque Ætnæ ſimul; reſtringite flammas
O lacrimæ, aut lacrimas ebibe flamma meas.

One of the ſevere theologians of that time cenſured him as having publiſhed *a book of profane and laſcivious Verſes*. From the charge of profaneneſs, the conſtant tenour of his life, which ſeems to have been eminently virtuous, and the general tendency of his opinions, which diſcover no irreverence of religion, muſt defend him; but that the accuſation of laſciviouſneſs is unjuſt, the peruſal of his works will ſufficiently evince.

Cowley's *Miſtreſs* has no power of ſeduction: "ſhe plays round the head, but comes not at the heart." Her beauty and abſence, her kindneſs and cruelty, her diſdain and inconſtancy, produce no correſpondence of emotion. His poetical account of the virtues of plants, and colours of flowers, is not peruſed with more ſluggiſh frigidity. The compoſitions are ſuch as might have been written for penance by a hermit, or for hire by a philoſophical rhymer who had only heard of another ſex; for they turn the mind only on the writer, whom, without thinking on a woman but as the ſubject for his taſk, we ſometimes eſteem as learned, and ſometimes deſpiſe as trifling, always admire as ingenious, and always condemn as unnatural.

The Pindarique Odes are now to be conſidered; a ſpecies of compoſition, which Cowley thinks Pancirolus might have counted *in his liſt of the loſt inventions of antiquity*, and which he has made a bold and vigorous attempt to recover.

The purpoſe with which he has paraphraſed an Olympick and Nemæan Ode, is by himſelf ſufficiently

ently explained. His endeavour was, not to ſhew *cijely what Pindar ſpoke, but his manner of ſpeaking.* was therefore not at all reſtrained to his expreſſi nor much to his ſentiments; nothing was requ of him, but not to write as Pindar would not l written.

Of the Olympick Ode the beginning is, I th above the original in elegance, and the concluſion low it it in ſtrength. The connection is ſupplied great perſpicuity, and the thoughts, which to a re of leſs ſkill ſeem thrown together by chance, are catenated without any abruption. Though the l liſh ode cannot be called a tranſlation, it may be properly conſulted as a commentary.

The ſpirit of Pindar is indeed not every w equally preſerved. The following pretty lines ar ſuch as his *deep mouth* was uſed to pour:

Great Rhea's ſon,
If in Olympus' top where thou
Sitt'ſt to behold thy ſacred ſhow,
If in Alpheus' ſilver flight,
If in my verſe thou take delight,
My verſe, great Rhea's ſon, which is
Lofty as that, and ſmooth as this.

In the Nemæan ode the reader muſt, in mere ji to Pindar, obſerve that whatever is ſaid of *the or new moon, her tender forehead and her horns,* is f added by his paraphraſt, who has many other pla words and fancy unſuitable to the original, as,

The table, free for every gueſt,
No doubt will thee admit,
And feaſt more upon thee, than thou on it.

He ſometimes extends his author's thoughts without improving them.* In the Olympionick an oath is mentioned in a ſingle word, and Cowley ſpends three lines in ſwearing by the *Caſtalian Stream*. We are told of Theron's bounty, with a hint that he had enemies, which Cowley thus enlarges in rhyming proſe:

But in this thankleſs world the giver
Is envied even by the receiver;
'Tis now the cheap and frugal faſhion
Rather to hide than own the obligation;
Nay, 'tis much worſe than ſo;
It now an artifice does grow
Wrongs and injuries to do,
Leſt men ſhould think we owe.

It is hard to conceive that a man of the firſt rank in learning and wit, when he was dealing out ſuch minute morality in ſuch feeble diction, could imagine, either waking or dreaming, that he imitated Pindar.

In the following odes, where Cowley chooſes his own ſubjects, he ſometimes riſes to dignity truly Pindarick; and, if ſome deficiencies of language be forgiven, his ſtrains are ſuch as thoſe of the Theban bard were to his contemporaries:

Begin the ſong, and ſtrike the living lyre:
Lo how the years to come, a numerous and well-fitted quire,
All hand in hand do decently advance,
And to my ſong with ſmooth and equal meaſure dance;
While the dance laſts, how long foe'er it be,
My muſick's voice ſhall bear it company;
Till all gentle notes be drown'd
In the laſt trumpet's dreadful ſound.

After ſuch enthuſiaſm, who will not lament to find the poet conclude with lines like theſe!

But ſtop, my Muſe—
Hold thy Pindaric Pegaſus cloſely in,
Which does to rage begin—
—'Tis an unruly and a hard-mouth'd horſe—
'Twill no unſkilful touch endure,
But flings writer and reader too that ſits not ſure.

The fault of Cowley, and perhaps of all the wr
of the metaphyſical race, is that of purſuing
thoughts to their laſt ramifications, by which he
the grandeur of generality; for of the greateſt th
the parts are little; what is little can be but pr
and by claiming dignity becomes ridiculous. Thu
the power of deſcription is deſtroyed by a ſcrupu
enumeration; and the force of metaphors is loſt, w
the mind by the mention of particulars is turned
upon the original than the ſecondary ſenſe, more
that from which the illuſtration is drawn than th
which it is applied.

Of this we have a very eminent example in the
intituled *The Muſe*, who goes to *take the air* in a
tellectual chariot, to which he harneſſes Fancy
Judgement, Wit and Eloquence, Memory and Im
tion: how he diſtinguiſhed Wit from Fancy, or
Memory could properly contribute to Motion, h
not explained; we are however content to ſuppoſe
he could have juſtified his own fiction, and wiſh t
the Muſe begin her career; but there is yet mo
be done.

Let the *poſtilion* Nature mount, and let
The *coachman* Art be ſet;
And let the airy *footmen*, running all beſide,
Make a long row of goodly pride,
Figures, conceits, raptures, and ſentences,
In a well-worded dreſs,

And innocent loves, and pleaſant truths, and uſeful lies,
In all their gaudy *liveries.*

Every mind is now diſguſted with this cumber of magnificence; yet I cannot refuſe myſelf the four next lines:

Mount, glorious queen, thy travelling throne,
And bid it to put on;
For long though cheerful is the way,
And life alas allows but one ill winter's day.

In the ſame ode, celebrating the power of the Muſe, he gives her preſcience, or, in poetical language, the foreſight of events hatching in futurity; but having once an egg in his mind, he cannot forbear to ſhew us that he knows what an egg contains:

Thou into the cloſe neſts of Time doſt peep,
And there with piercing eye
Through the firm ſhell and the thick white doſt ſpy
Years to come a-forming lie,
Cloſe in their ſacred fecundine aſleep.

The ſame thought is more generally, and therefore more poetically, expreſſed by Caſimir, a writer, who has many of the beauties and faults of Cowley:

Omnibus mundi Dominator horis
Aptat urgendas per inane pennas,
Pars adhuc nido latet, & futuros
Creſcit in annos.

Cowley, whatever was his ſubject, ſeems to have been carried, by a kind of deſtiny, to the light and the familiar, or to conceits which require ſtill more ignoble epithets. A ſlaughter in the Red Sea *new dies the waters name*; and England, during the Civil War, was *Albion no more, nor to be named from white.* It is ſurely by ſome faſcination not eaſily ſurmounted, that

a writer profeſſing to revive *the nobleſt and higheſt writing in verſe*, makes this addreſs to the new year:

Nay, if thou lov'ſt me, gentle year,
Let not ſo much as love be there,
Vain fruitleſs love I mean; for, gentle year,
Although I fear,
There's of this caution little need,
Yet, gentle year, take heed
How thou doſt make
Such a miſtake;
Such love I mean alone
As by thy cruel predeceſſors has been ſhewn;
For, though I have too much cauſe to doubt it,
I fain would try, for once, if life can live without it.

The reader of this will be inclined to cry out with Prior—

Ye Critics, ſay,
How poor to this was Pindar's ſtyle!

Even thoſe who cannot perhaps find in the Iſthmian or Nemeæan ſongs what Antiquity has diſpoſed them to expect, will at leaſt ſee that they are ill repreſented by ſuch puny poetry; and all will determine that, if this be the old Theban ſtrain, it is not worthy of revival.

To the diſproportion and incongruity of Cowley's ſentiments muſt be added the uncertainty and looſeneſs of his meaſures. He takes the liberty of uſing in any place a verſe of any length, from two ſyllables to twelve. The verſes of Pindar have, as he obſerves, very little harmony to a modern ear; yet by examining the ſyllables we perceive them to be regular, and have reaſon enough for ſuppoſing that the ancient audiences were delighted with the ſound. The imitator ought therefore to have adopted what he found, and to have added what was wanting; to have preſerved a con-

ſtant

ſtant return of the ſame numbers, and to have ſupplied ſmoothneſs of tranſition and continuity of thought.

It is urged by Dr. Sprat, that the *irregularity of numbers is the very thing* which makes *that kind of poeſy fit for all manner of ſubjects*. But he ſhould have remembered, that what is fit for every thing can fit nothing well. The great pleaſure of verſe ariſes from the known meaſure of the lines, and uniform ſtructure of the ſtanzas, by which the voice is regulated, and the memory relieved.

If the Pindaric ſtyle be, what Cowley thinks it, *the higheſt and nobleſt kind of writing in verſe*, it can be adapted only to high and noble ſubjects; and it will not be eaſy to reconcile the poet with the critick, or to conceive how that can be the higheſt kind of writing in verſe, which, according to Sprat, *is chiefly to be preferred for its near affinity to proſe*.

This lax and lawleſs verſification ſo much concealed the deficiences of the barren, and flattered the lazineſs of the idle, that it immediately overſpread our books of poetry; all the boys and girls caught the pleaſing faſhion, and they that could do nothing elſe could write like Pindar. The rights of antiquity were invaded, and diſorder tried to break into the Latin: a poem on the Sheldonian Theatre, in which all kinds of verſe are ſhaken together, is unhappily inſerted in the *Muſæ Anglicanæ*. Pindariſm prevailed above half a century; but at laſt died gradually away, and other imitations ſupply its place.

The Pindarique Odes have ſo long enjoyed the higheſt degree of poetical reputation, that I am not willing to diſmiſs them with unabated cenſure; and ſurely though the mode of their compoſition be er-

roneous, yet many parts deſerve at leaſt that admiration which is due to great comprehenſion of knowledge, and great fertility of fancy. The thoughts are often new, and often ſtriking; but the greatneſs of one part is diſgraced by the littleneſs of another; and total negligence of language gives the nobleſt conceptions the appearance of a fabric auguſt in the plan, but mean in the materials. Yet ſurely thoſe verſes are not without a juſt claim to praiſe; of which it may be ſaid with truth, that no man but Cowley could have written them.

The Davideis now remains to be conſidered; a poem which the author deſigned to have extended to twelve books, merely, as he makes no ſcruple of declaring, becauſe the Æneid had that number; but he had leiſure or perſeverance only to write the third part. Epick poems have been left unfiniſhed by Virgil, Statius, Spenſer, and Cowley. That we have not the whole Davideis is, however, not much to be regretted; for in this undertaking Cowley is, tacitly at leaſt, confeſſed to have miſcarried. There are not many examples of ſo great a work, produced by an author generally read, and generally praiſed, that has crept through a century with ſo little regard. Whatever is ſaid of Cowley, is meant of his other works. Of the Davideis no mention is made; it never appears in books, nor emerges in converſation. By the *Spectator* it has once been quoted, by *Prior* it has once been praiſed, and by *Dryden*, in "Mac Flecknoe," it has once been imitated; nor do I recollect much other notice from its publication till now, in the whole ſucceſſion of Engliſh literature.

Of

Of this ſilence and neglect, if the reaſon be inquired, it will be found partly in the choice of the ſubject, and partly in the performance of the work.

Sacred Hiſtory has been always read with ſubmiſſive reverence, and an imagination over-awed and controlled. We have been accuſtomed to acquieſce in the nakedneſs and ſimplicity of the authentic narrative, and to repoſe on its veracity with ſuch humble confidence, as ſuppreſſes curioſity. We go with the hiſtorian as he goes, and ſtop with him when he ſtops. All amplification is frivolous and vain; all addition to that which is already ſufficient for the purpoſes of religion, ſeems not only uſeleſs, but in ſome degree profane.

Such events as were produced by the viſible interpoſition of Divine Power are above the power of human genius to dignify. The miracle of Creation, however it may teem with images, is beſt deſcribed with little diffuſion of language: *He ſpake the word, and they were made.*

We are told that Saul *was troubled with an evil ſpirit*; from this Cowley takes an opportunity of deſcribing hell, and telling the hiſtory of Lucifer, who was, he ſays,

> Once general of a gilded hoſt of ſprites,
> Like Heſper leading forth the ſpangled nights;
> But down like lightning, which him ſtruck, he came,
> And roar'd at his firſt plunge into the flame.

Lucifer makes a ſpeech to the inferior agents of miſchief, in which there is ſomething of heatheniſm, and therefore of impropriety; and, to give efficacy to his words, concludes by laſhing *his breaſt with his long*

tail. Envy, after a pauſe, ſteps out, and among other declarations of her zeal utters theſe lines:

Do thou but threat, loud ſtorms ſhall make reply,
And thunder echo to the trembling ſky.
Whilſt raging ſeas ſwell to ſo bold an height,
As ſhall the fire's proud element affright.
Th' old drudging Sun, from his long beaten way,
Shall at thy voice ſtart, and miſguide the day.
The jocund orbs ſhall break their meaſur'd pace,
And ſtubborn poles change their allotted place.
Heaven's gilded troops ſhall flutter here and there,
Leaving their boaſting ſongs tun'd to a ſphere.

Every reader feels himſelf weary with this uſeleſs talk of an allegorical Being.

It is not only when the events are confeſſedly miraculous, that fancy and fiction loſe their effect: the whole ſyſtem of life, while the Theocracy was yet viſible, has an appearance ſo different from all other ſcenes of human action, that the reader of the Sacred Volume habitually conſiders it as the peculiar mode of exiſtence of a diſtinct ſpecies of mankind, that lived and acted with manners uncommunicable; ſo that it is difficult even for imagination to place us in the ſtate of them whoſe ſtory is related, and by conſequence their joys and griefs are not eaſily adopted, nor can the attention be often intereſted in any thing that befalls them.

To the ſubject thus originally indiſpoſed to the reception of poetical embelliſhments, the writer brought little that could reconcile impatience, or attract curioſity. Nothing can be more diſguſting than a narrative ſpangled with conceits, and conceits are all that the Davideis ſupplies.

One of the great ſources of poetical delight is deſcription, or the power of preſenting pictures to the mind.

Cowley

Cowley gives inferences inſtead of images, and ſhews not what may be ſuppoſed to have been ſeen, but what thoughts the ſight might have ſuggeſted. When Virgil deſcribes the ſtone which Turnus lifted againſt Æneas, he fixes the attention on its bulk and weight:

Saxum circumſpicit ingens,
Saxum antiquum, ingens, campo quod forte jacebat
Limes agro poſitus, litem ut diſcerneret arvis.

Cowley ſays of the ſtone with which Cain ſlew his brother,

I ſaw him fling the ſtone, as if he meant
At once his murther and his monument.

Of the ſword taken from Goliah, he ſays,

A ſword ſo great, that it was only fit
To cut off his great head that came with it.

Other poets deſcribe death by ſome of its common appearances; Cowley ſays, with a learned alluſion to ſepulchral lamps real or fabulous,

'Twixt his right ribs deep pierc'd the furious blade,
And open'd wide thoſe ſecret veſſels where
Life's light goes out, when firſt they let in air.

But he has alluſions vulgar as well as learned. In a viſionary ſucceſſion of kings:

Joas at firſt does bright and glorious ſhow,
In life's freſh morn his fame does early crow.

Deſcribing an undiſciplined army, after having ſaid with elegance,

His forces ſeem'd no army, but a crowd
Heartleſs, unarm'd, diſorderly, and loud,

he gives them a fit of the ague,

The

The alluſions however are not always to vulgar things: he offends by exaggeration as much as by diminution:

The king was plac'd alone, and o'er his head
A well-wrought heaven of ſilk and gold was ſpread.

Whatever he writes is always polluted with ſome conceit:

Where the ſun's fruitful beams give metals birth,
Where he the growth of fatal gold does ſee,
Gold, which alone more influence has than he.

In one paſſage he ſtarts a ſudden queſtion, to the confuſion of philoſophy:

Ye learned heads, whom ivy garlands grace,
Why does that twining plant the oak embrace?
The oak, for courtſhip moſt of all unfit,
And rough as are the winds that fight with it.

His expreſſions have ſometimes a degree of meanneſs that ſurpaſſes expectation:

Nay, gentle gueſts, he cries, ſince now you're in,
The ſtory of your gallant friend begin.

In a ſimile deſcriptive of the Morning:

As glimmering ſtars juſt at th' approach of day,
Caſhier'd by troops, at laſt drop all away.

The dreſs of Gabriel deſerves attention:

He took for ſkin a cloud moſt ſoft and bright,
That e'er the midday ſun pierc'd through with light,
Upon his cheeks a lively bluſh he ſpread,
Waſh'd from the morning beauties deepeſt red;
An harmleſs flattering meteor ſhone for hair,
And fell adown his ſhoulders with looſe care;
He cuts out a ſilk mantle from the ſkies,
Where the moſt ſprightly azure pleas'd the eyes;

This

This he with ſtarry vapours ſprinkles all,
Took in their prime ere they grow ripe and fall;
Of a new rainbow ere it fret or fade,
The choiceſt piece cut out, a ſcarfe is made,

This is a juſt ſpecimen of Cowley's imagery: what might in general expreſſions be great and forcible, he weakens and makes ridiculous by branching it into ſmall parts. That Gabriel was inveſted with the ſofteſt or brighteſt colours of the ſky, we might have been told, and been diſmiſſed to improve the idea in our different proportions of conception; but Cowley could not let us go till he had related where Gabriel got firſt his ſkin, and then his mantle, then his lace, and then his ſcarfe, and related it in the terms of the mercer and taylor.

Sometimes he indulges himſelf in a digreſſion, always conceived with his natural exuberance, and commonly, even where it is not long, continued till it is tedious:

I' th' library a few choice authors ſtood,
Yet 'twas well ſtor'd; for that ſmall ſtore was good;
Writing, man's ſpiritual phyſic, was not then
Itſelf, as now, grown a diſeaſe of men.
Learning (young virgin) but few ſuitors knew;
The common proſtitute ſhe lately grew,
And with the ſpurious brood loads now the preſs;
Laborious effects of idleneſs.

As the Davideis affords only four books, though intended to conſiſt of twelve, there is no opportunity for ſuch criticiſms as Epick poems commonly ſupply. The plan of the whole work is very imperfectly ſhewn by the third part. The duration of an unfiniſhed action cannot be known. Of characters either not yet introduced, or ſhewn but upon few occaſions, the full extent

tent and the nice diſcriminations cannot be aſcertained. The fable is plainly implex, formed rather from the Odyſſey than the Iliad; and many artifices of diverſification are employed, with the ſkill of a man acquainted with the beſt models. The paſt is recalled by narration, and the future anticipated by viſion: but he has been ſo laviſh of his poetical art, that it is difficult to imagine how he could fill eight books more without practiſing again the ſame modes of diſpoſing his matter; and perhaps the perception of this growing incumbrance inclined him to ſtop. By this abruption, poſterity loſt more inſtruction than delight. If the continuation of the Davideis can be miſſed, it is for the learning that had been diffuſed over it, and the notes in which it had been explained.

Had not his characters been depraved like every other part by improper decorations, they would have deſerved uncommon praiſe. He gives Saul both the body and mind of a hero:

> His way once choſe, he forward thruſt outright,
> Nor turn'd aſide for danger or delight.

And the different beauties of the lofty Merab and the gentle Michol are very juſtly conceived and ſtrongly painted.

Rymer has declared the Davideis ſuperior to the *Jeruſalem of Taſſo*, "which," ſays he, "the poet, with "all his care, has not totally purged from pedantry." If by pedantry is meant that minute knowledge which is derived from particular ſciences and ſtudies, in oppoſition to the general notions ſupplied by a wide ſurvey of life and nature, Cowley certainly errs, by introducing pedantry far more frequently than Taſſo. I know not, indeed, why they ſhould be compared;

for the reſemblance of Cowley's work to Taſſo's is only that they both exhibit the agency of celeſtial and infernal ſpirits, in which however they differ widely; for Cowley ſuppoſes them commonly to operate upon the mind by ſuggeſtion; Taſſo repreſents them as promoting or obſtructing events by external agency.

Of particular paſſages that can be properly compared, I remember only the deſcription of Heaven, in which the different manner of the two writers is ſufficiently diſcernible. Cowley's is ſcarcely deſcription, unleſs it be poſſible to deſcribe by negatives; for he tells us only what there is not in heaven. Taſſo endeavours to repreſent the ſplendours and pleaſures of the regions of happineſs. Taſſo affords images, and Cowley ſentiments. It happens, however, that Taſſo's deſcription affords ſome reaſon for Rymer's cenſure. He ſays of the Supreme Being,

> Hà ſotto i piedi e fato e la natura
> Miniſtri humili, e'l moto, e ch'il miſura.

The ſecond line has in it more of pedantry than perhaps can be found in any other ſtanza of the poem.

In the peruſal of the Davideis, as of all Cowley's works, we find wit and learning unprofitably ſquandered. Attention has no relief; the affections are never moved; we are ſometimes ſurpriſed, but never delighted, and find much to admire, but little to approve. Still however it is the work of Cowley, of a mind capacious by nature, and repleniſhed by ſtudy.

In the general review of Cowley's poetry it will be found, that he wrote with abundant facility, but negligent or unſkilful ſelection; with much thought: but with little imagery: that he is never pathetick,

and

and rarely ſublime, but always either ingenious or learned, either acute or profound.

It is ſaid by Denham in his elegy,

> To him no author was unknown;
> Yet what he writ was all his own.

This wide poſition requires leſs limitation, when it is affirmed of Cowley, than perhaps of any other poet—He read much, and yet borrowed little.

His character of writing was indeed not his own: he unhappily adopted that which was predominant. He ſaw a certain way to preſent praiſe, and not ſufficiently enquiring by what means the ancients have continued to delight through all the changes of human manners, he contented himſelf with a deciduous laurel, of which the verdure in its ſpring was bright and gay, but which time has been continually ſtealing from his brows.

He was in his own time conſidered as of unrivalled excellence. Clarendon repreſents him as having taken a flight beyond all that went before him; and Milton is ſaid to have declared, that the three greateſt Engliſh poets were Spenſer, Shakſpeare, and Cowley.

His manner he had in common with others: but his ſentiments were his own. Upon every ſubject he thought for himſelf; and ſuch was his copiouſneſs of knowledge, that ſomething at once remote and applicable ruſhed into his mind; yet it is not likely that he always rejected a commodious idea merely becauſe another had uſed it: his known wealth was ſo great, that he might have borrowed without loſs of credit.

In his elegy on Sir Henry Wotton, the laſt lines have ſuch reſemblance to the noble epigram of Grotius upon the death of Scaliger, that I cannot but think them copied

copied from it, though they are copied by no ſervile hand.

One paſſage in his *Miſtreſs* is ſo apparently borrowed from Donne, that he probably would not have written it, had it not mingled with his own thoughts, ſo as that he did not perceive himſelf taking it from another.

Although I think thou never found wilt be,
Yet I'm reſolv'd to ſearch for thee;
The ſearch itſelf rewards the pains.
So, though the chymic his great ſecret miſs,
(For neither it in Art nor Nature is)
Yet things well worth his toil he gains:
And does his charge and labour pay
With good unſought experiments by the way.

COWLEY.

Some that have deeper digg'd Love's mine than I,
Say, where his centric happineſs doth lie:
I have lov'd, and got, and told;
But ſhould I love, get, tell, till I were old,
I ſhould not find that hidden myſtery;
Oh, 'tis impoſture all;
And as no chymic yet th' elixir got,
But glorifies his pregnant pot,
If by the way to him befal
Some odoriferous thing, or medicinal,
So lovers dream a rich and long delight,
But get a winter-ſeeming ſummer's night.

Jonſon and Donne, as Dr. Hurd remarks, were then in the higheſt eſteem.

It is related by Clarendon, that Cowley always acknowledges his obligation to the learning and induſtry of Jonſon; but I have found no traces of Jonſon in his works: to emulate Donne, appears to have been his purpoſe; and from Donne he may have learned that familiarity with religious images, and that light alluſion to

harſh to modern ears. He has i[illegible]d [illegible]ny noble lines, ſuch as the feeble care of Waller never could produce. The bulk of his thoughts ſometimes ſwelled his verſe to unexpected and inevitable grandeur; but his excellence of this kind is merely fortuitous: he ſinks willingly down to his general careleſſneſs, and avoids with very little care either meanneſs or aſperity.

His contractions are often rugged and harſh:

> One flings a mountain, and its rivers too
> Torn up with't.

His rhymes are very often made by pronouns or particles, or the like unimportant words, which diſappoint the ear, and deſtroy the energy of the line.

His combination of different meaſures is ſometimes diſſonate and unpleaſing; he joins verſes together, of which the former does not ſlide eaſily into the latter.

The words *do* and *did*, which ſo much degrade in preſent eſtimation the line that admits them, were in the time of Cowley little cenſured or avoided; how often he uſed them, and with how bad an effect, at leaſt to our ears, will appear by a paſſage, in which every reader will lament to ſee juſt and noble thoughts defrauded of their praiſe by inelegance of language:

> Where honour or where conſcience *does* not blind,
> No other law ſhall ſhackle me;
> Slave to myſelf I ne'er will be;
> Nor ſhall my future actions be confin'd
> By my own preſent mind.
> Who by reſolves and vows engag'd *does* ſtand
> For days, that yet belong to fate,
> *Does* like an unthrift mortgage his eſtate,

Before

Before it falls into his hand,
The bondman of the cloiſter ſo,
All that he *does* receive *does* always owe.
And ſtill as Time comes in, it goes away,
Not to enjoy, but debts to pay!
Unhappy ſlave, and pupil to a bell!
Which his hours' work as well as hours *does* tell:
Unhappy till the laſt, the kind releaſing knell.

His heroick lines are often formed of monoſyllables; but yet they are ſometimes ſweet and ſonorous.

He ſays of the Meſſiah,

Round the whole earth his dreaded name ſhall ſound,
And reach to worlds that muſt not yet be found.

In another place, of David,

Yet bid him go ſecurely, when he ſends;
'Tis Saul that is his foe, and we his friends.
The man who has his God, no aid can lack;
And we who bid him go, will bring him back.

Yet amidſt his negligence he ſometimes attempted an improved and ſcientifick verſification; of which it will be beſt to give his own account ſubjoined to this line,

Nor can the glory contain itſelf in th' endleſs ſpace.

"I am ſorry that it is neceſſary to admoniſh the moſt "part of readers, that it is not by negligence that this "verſe is ſo looſe, long, and, as is were, vaſt; it is to "paint in the number the nature of the thing which it "deſcribes, which I would have obſerved in divers "other places of this poem, that elſe will paſs for very "carleſs verſes: as before,

And over-runs the neighb'ring fields with violent courſe.

" In the ſecond book;

Down a precipice deep, down he caſts them all.—

" —And,

And fell a-down his ſhoulders with looſe care.

" In the third,

Braſs was his helmet, his boots braſs, and o'er
His breaſt a thick plate of ſtrong braſs he wore.

" In the fourth,

Like ſome fair pine-o'er-looking all th' ignobler wood.

" And,

Some from the rocks caſt themſelves down headlong.

" And many more: but it is enough to inſtance in a few. " The thing is, that the diſpoſition of words and num- " bers ſhould be ſuch, as that, out of the order and ſound " of them, the things themſelves may be repreſented. " This the Greeks were not ſo accurate as to bind them- " ſelves to; neither have our Engliſh poets obſerved it, " for aught I can find. The Latins *(qui muſas colunt* " *ſeveriores)* ſometimes did it, and their prince, Virgil, " always: in whom the examples are innumerable, and " taken notice of by all judicious men, ſo that it is ſuper- " fluous to collect them."

I know not whether he has, in many of theſe inſtances, attained the repreſentation or reſemblance that he purpoſes. Verſe can imitate only ſound and motion. A *boundleſs* verſe, a *headlong* verſe, and a verſe of *braſs* or of *ſtrong braſs*, ſeem to compriſe very incongruous and unſociable ideas. What there is peculiar in the ſound of the line expreſſing *looſe care*, I cannot diſcover; nor why the *pine* is *taller* in an Alexandrine than [illegible] les.

But,

But, not to defraud him of his due praiſe, he has ven one example of repreſentative verſification, hich perhaps no other Engliſh line can equal:

Begin, be bold, and venture to be wiſe,
He who defers this work from day to day,
Does on a river's bank expecting ſtay
Till the whole ſtream that ſtopp'd him ſhall be gone,
Which runs, and as it runs, for ever ſhall run on.

Cowley was, I believe, the firſt poet that mingled exandrines at pleaſure with the common heroick of 1 ſyllables, and from him Dryden borrowed the prac-e, whether ornamental or licentious. He conſidered : verſe of twelve ſyllables as elevated and majeſtick, d has therefore deviated into that meaſure when he ppoſes the voice heard of the Supreme Being.

The Author of the Davideis is commended by Dryden : having written it in couplets, becauſe he diſcovered at any ſtaff was too lyrical for an heroick poem; t this ſeems to have been known before by *May* d *Sandys*, the tranſlators of the Pharſalia and the etamorphoſes.

In the Davideis are ſome hemiſtichs, or verſes left im-rfect by the author, in imitation of Virgil, whom he ppoſes not to have intended to complete them: that s opinion is erroneous, may be probably concluded, :auſe this truncation is imitated by no ſubſequent man poet; becauſe Virgil himſelf filled up one bro-n line in the heat of recitation; becauſe in one the ſe is now unfiniſhed; and becauſe all that can be done a broken verſe, a line interſected by a *cæſura* and a l ſtop will equally effect.

Of triplets in his Davideis he makes no uſe, and per-ps did not at firſt think them allowable; but he ap-

pears afterwards to have changed his mind, for in the verſes on the government of Cromwell he inſerts them liberally with great happineſs.

After ſo much criticiſm on his Poems, the Eſſays which accompany them muſt not be forgotten. What is ſaid by Sprat of his converſation, that no man could draw from it any ſuſpicion of his excellence in poetry, may be applied to theſe compoſitions. No author ever kept his verſe and his proſe at a greater diſtance from each other. His thoughts are natural, and his ſtyle has a ſmooth and placid equability, which has never yet obtained its due commendation. Nothing is far-ſought, or hard-laboured; but all is eaſy without feebleneſs, and familiar without groſsneſs.

It has been obſerved by Felton, in his Eſſay on the Claſſicks, that Cowley was beloved by every Muſe that he courted; and that he has rivaled the Ancients in every kind of poetry but tragedy.

It may be affirmed, without any encomiaſtick fervour, that he brought to his poetick labours a mind replete with learning, and that his pages are embelliſhed with all the ornaments which books could ſupply; that he was the firſt who imparted to Engliſh numbers the enthuſiaſm of the greater ode, and the gaiety of the leſs; that he was equally qualified for ſpritely ſallies, and for lofty flights; that he was among thoſe who freed tranſlation from ſervility, and, inſtead of following his author at a diſtance, walked by his ſide; and that if he left verſification yet improvable, he left likewiſe from time to time ſuch ſpecimens of excellence as enabled ſucceeding poets to improve it.

DENHAM.

DENHAM.

OF Sir JOHN DENHAM very little is known but what is related of him by Wood, or by himſelf.

He was born at Dublin in 1615; the only ſon of Sir John Denham, of Little Horſely in Eſſex, then chief baron of the Exchequer in Ireland *, and of Eleanor, daughter of Sir Garret More baron of Melleſont.

Two years afterwards, his father, being made one of the barons of the Exchequer in England, brought him away from his native country, and educated him in London.

In 1631 he was ſent to Oxford, where he was conſidered "as a dreaming young man, given more to dice "and cards than ſtudy;" and therefore gave no prognoſticks of his future eminence; nor was ſuſpected to conceal, under ſluggiſhneſs and laxity, a genius born to improve the literature of his country.

* In Dugdale's Orig. Jur. the name of John Denham occurs, a puiſne Baron of the Exchequer at Weſtminſter, conſtituted 15 Jac. A. D. 1617, before which time, as Wood relates, he had been promoted to the office of Chief Baron of the Iriſh Exchequer. There are ſundry of his arguments in "Coke's Reports."

When he was, three years afterwards, removed to Lincoln's Inn, he profecuted the common law with ſufficient appearance of application; yet did not loſe his propenſity to cards and dice; but was very often plundered by gameſters.

Being ſeverely reproved for this folly, he profeſſed, and perhaps believed, himſelf reclaimed; and to teſtify the ſincerity of his repentance, wrote and publiſhed "An "Eſſay upon Gaming."

He ſeems to have divided his ſtudies between law and poetry; for, in 1636, he tranſlated the ſecond book of the Æneid.

Two years after, his father died; and then, notwithſtanding his reſolutions and profeſſions, he returned again to the vice of gaming, and loſt ſeveral thouſand pounds that had been left him.

In 1631, he publiſhed "The Sophy." This ſeems to have given him his firſt hold of the publick attention; for Waller remarked, "that he broke out like the "Iriſh rebellion threeſcore thouſand ſtrong when no-"body was aware, or in the leaſt ſuſpected it:" an obſervation which could have had no propriety, had his poetical abilities been known before.

He was after that pricked for ſheriff of Surrey, and made governor of Farnham Caſtle for the king; but he ſoon reſigned that charge, and retreated to Oxford, where, in 1643, he publiſhed "Cooper's "Hill."

This poem had ſuch reputation as to excite the common artifice by which envy degrades excellence. A report was ſpread, that the performance was not his own, but that he had bought it of a vicar for forty pounds.

The

The ſame attempt was made to rob Addiſon of his Cato, and pope of his Eſſay on Criticiſm *.

In 1647, the diſtreſſes of the royal family required him to engage in more dangerous employments. He was entruſted by the queen with a meſſage to the king; and, by whatever means, ſo far ſoftened the ferocity of Hugh Peters, that by his interceſſion, admiſſion was procured. Of the king's condeſcenſion he has given an account in the dedication of his works.

He was afterwards employed in carrying on the king's correſpondence; and, as he ſays, diſcharged this office with great ſafety to the royaliſts: and being accidentally diſcovered by the adverſe party's knowledge of Mr. Cowley's hand, he eſcaped happily both for himſelf and his friends.

He was yet engaged in a greater undertaking. In April 1648, he conveyed James the duke of York from London into France, and delivered him there to the Queen and prince of Wales. This year he publiſhed his tranſlation of "Cato Major."

He now reſided in France, as one of the followers of the exiled king; and, to divert the melancholy of their condition, was ſometimes enjoined by his maſter to write occaſional verſes; one of which amuſements was probably his ode or ſong upon the Embaſſy to Poland, by which he and lord Crofts procured a contribution of ten thouſand pounds from the Scotch, that wandered over that kingdom. Poland was at that time very much frequented by itinerant traders, who, in a country of very little commerce and of great extent, where every man reſided on his own eſtate, contributed very much to the accommoda-

* And Swift of his "Tale of a Tub."

tion

tion of life, by bringing to every man's houſe thoſe little neceſſaries which it was very inconvenient to want, and very troubleſome to fetch. I have formerly read, without much reflection, of the multitude of Scotchmen that travelled with their wares in Poland; and that their numbers were not ſmall, the ſucceſs of this negotiation gives ſufficient evidence.

About this time, what eſtate the war and the gameſters had left him was ſold, by order of the parliament; and when, in 1652, he returned to England, he was entertained by the earl of Pembroke.

Of the next years of his life there is no account. At the Reſtoration he obtained, that which many miſſed, the reward of his loyalty; being made ſurveyor of the king's buildings *, and dignified with the order of the Bath. He ſeems now to have learned ſome attention to money; for Wood ſays, that he got by his place ſeven thouſand pounds.

After the Reſtoration he wrote the poem on Prudence and Juſtice, and perhaps ſome of his other pieces: and as he appears, whenever any ſerious queſtion comes before him, to have been a man of piety, he conſecrated his poetical powers to religion, and made a metrical verſion of the pſalms of David. In this attempt he has failed; but, in ſacred poetry who has ſucceeded?

It might be hoped that the favour of his maſter and eſteem of the publick would now make him happy. But human felicity is ſhort and uncertain; a ſecond

* In the room of Inigo Jones. It does not appear that he had any ſkill in architecture, but rather, that he was aſſiſted in his office by Dr. (afterwards Sir Chriſtopher) Wren, who ſucceeded him in it. Biogr. Brit. Art. Wren.

marriage

arriage brought upon him ſo much diſquiet, as for time diſordered his underſtanding; and Butler lamented him for his lunacy. I know not whether the malignant lines were then made publick, nor what provocation incited Butler to do that which no provocation can excuſe.

His frenzy laſted not long; and he ſeems to have regained his full force of mind; for he wrote afterwards his excellent poem upon the death of Cowley, from he was not long to ſurvive; for on the 19th of March, 1688, he was buried by his ſide.

DENHAM is deſervedly conſidered as one of the chers of Engliſh poetry. "Denham and Waller," ys Prior, "improved our verſification, and Dryden perfected it." He has given ſpecimens of various mpoſition, deſcriptive, ludicrous, didactick, and blime.

He appears to have had, in common with almoſt all ankind, the ambition of being upon proper occaſions *merry fellow*, and in common with moſt of them to ve been by nature, or by early habits, debarred from

Nothing is leſs exhilarating than the ludicrouſneſs of Denham: He does not fail for want of efrts: he is familiar, he is groſs; but he is never erry, unleſs the "Speech againſt peace in the cloſe Committee" be excepted. For grave burleſque, wever, his imitation of Davenant ſhews him to ve been well qualified.

Of his more elevated occaſional poems there is perps none that does not deſerve commendation. In e verſes to Fletcher, we have an image that has ce been adopted:

"But

" But whither am I ſtray'd? I need not raiſe
" Trophies to thee from other mens diſpraiſe;
" Nor is thy fame on leſſer ruins built,
" Nor need thy juſter title the foul guilt
" Of eaſtern kings, who, to ſecure their reign,
" Muſt have their brothers, ſons, and kindred ſlain."

After Denham, Orrery, in one of his prologues,

" Poets are ſultans, if they had their will;
" For every author would his brother kill."

And Pope,

" Should ſuch a man, too fond to rule alone,
" Bear like the Turk no brother near the throne."

But this is not the beſt of his little pieces: it is excelled by his poem to Fanſhaw, and his elegy on Cowley.

His praiſe of Fanſhaw's verſion of Guarini, contains a very ſpritely and judicious character of a good tranſlator:

" That ſervile path thou nobly doſt decline,
" Of tracing word by word, and line by line.
" Thoſe are the labour'd births of ſlaviſh brains,
" Not the effect of poetry, but pains;
" Cheap vulgar arts, whoſe narrowneſs affords
" No flight for thoughts, but poorly ſtick at words.
" A new and nobler way thou doſt purſue,
" To make tranſlations and tranſlators too.
" They but preſerve the aſhes, thou the flame,
" True to his ſenſe, but truer to his fame."

The excellence of theſe lines is greater, as the truth which they contain was not at that time generally known.

His poem on the death of Cowley was his laſt, and, among his ſhorter works, his beſt performance: the numbers are muſical, and the thoughts are juſt.

" COOPER'S

"COOPER'S HILL" is the work that confers upon him the rank and dignity of an original author. He ſeems to have been, at leaſt among us, the author of a ſpecies of compoſition that may be denominated *local poetry*, of which the fundamental ſubject is ſome particular landſchape, to be poetically deſcribed, with the addition of ſuch embelliſhments as may be ſupplied by hiſtorical retroſpection or incidental meditation.

To trace a new ſcheme of poetry has in itſelf a very high claim to praiſe, and its praiſe is yet more when it is apparently copied by Garth and Pope*; after whoſe names little will be gained by an enumeration of ſmaller poets, that have left ſcarce a corner of the iſland not dignified either by rhyme, or blank verſe.

"COOPER'S HILL," if it be maliciouſly inſpected, will not be found without its faults. The digreſſions are too long, the morality too frequent, and the ſentiments ſometimes ſuch as will not bear a rigorous enquiry.

The four verſes, which, ſince Dryden has commended them, almoſt every writer for a century paſt has imitated, are generally known:

"O could I flow like thee, and make thy ſtream
"My great example, as it is my theme!
"Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull;
"Strong without rage, without o'er-flowing full."

The lines are in themſelves not perfect; for moſt of the words, thus artfully oppoſed, are to be underſtood ſimply on one ſide of the compariſon, and metaphorically on the other; and if there be any language

* By Garth, in his "Poem on Claremont," and by Pope, in his "Windſor Foreſt."

which

which does not expreſs intellect[illegible]ations by h
terial images, into that language they cannot
tranſlated. But ſo much meaning is comprized in
few words; the particulars of reſemblance are ſo p
ſpicaciouſly collected, and every mode of excelle
ſeparated from its adjacent fault by ſo nice a line
limitation; the different parts of the ſentence are
accurately adjuſted; and the flow of the laſt couple
ſo ſmooth and ſweet; that the paſſage, however ce
brated, has not been praiſed above its merit. It l
beauty peculiar to itſelf, and muſt be numbered amo
thoſe felicities which cannot be produced at will
wit and labour, but muſt ariſe unexpectedly in ſo
hour propitious to poetry.

He appears to have been one of the firſt that und
ſtood the neceſſity of emancipating tranſlation fr
the drudgery of counting lines and interpreting ſin
words. How much this ſervile practice obſcured
cleareſt and deformed the moſt beautiful parts of
ancient authors, may be diſcovered by a peruſal of
earlier verſions; ſome of them the works of men w
qualified, not only by critical knowledge, but by
etical genius, who yet, by a miſtaken ambition of
acteſs, degraded at once their originals and the
ſelves.

Denham ſaw the better way, but has not purſued
with great ſucceſs. His verſions of Virgil are
pleaſing; but they taught Dryden to pleaſe bett
His poetical imitation of Tully on "Old Age" l
neither the clearneſs of proſe, nor the ſpritelineſs
poetry.

The "ſtrength of Denham," which Pope ſo e
[illegible] is to be found in many lines a
couple

couplets, which convey much meaning in few words, and exhibit the ſentiment with more weight than bulk.

On the Thames.

"Though with thoſe ſtreams he no reſemblance hold,
"Whoſe foam is amber, and their gravel gold;
"His genuine and leſs guilty wealth t' explore,
"Search not his bottom, but ſurvey his ſhore."

On Strafford.

"His wiſdom ſuch, at once it did appear
"Three kingdoms wonder, and three kingdoms fear;
"While ſingle he ſtood forth, and ſeem'd although
"Each had an army, as an equal foe.
"Such was his force of eloquence, to make
"The hearers more concern'd than he that ſpake;
"Each ſeem'd to act that part he came to ſee,
"And none was more a looker-on than he;
"So did he move our paſſions, ſome were known
"To wiſh, for the defence, the crime their own.
"Now private pity ſtrove with publick hate,
"Reaſon with rage, and eloquence with fate."

On Cowley.

"To him no author was unknown,
"Yet what he wrote was all his own;
"Horace's wit, and Virgil's ſtate,
"He did not ſteal, but emulate!
"And when he would like them appear,
"Their garb, but not their cloaths, did wear."

As one of Denham's principal claims to the regard of poſterity ariſes from his improvement of our numbers, his verſification ought to be conſidered. It will afford that pleaſure which ariſes from the obſervation of a man of judgement naturally right forſaking bad

copies

copies by degrees, and advancing towards a better practice, as he gains more confidence in himſelf.

In his tranſlation of Virgil, written when he was about twenty-one years old, may be ſtill found the old manner of continuing the ſenſe ungracefully from verſe to verſe.

" Then all thoſe
" Who in the dark our fury did eſcape,
" Returning, know our borrow'd arms, and ſhape,
" And differing dialect: then their numbers ſwell
" And grow upon us; firſt Chorœbus fell
" Before Minerva's altar; next did bleed
" Juſt Ripheus, whom no Trojan did exceed
" In virtue, yet the gods his fate decreed.
" Then Hypanis and Dymas, wounded by
" Their friends; nor thee, Pantheus, thy piety,
" Nor conſecrated mitre, from the ſame
" Ill fate could ſave; my country's funeral flame
" And Troy's cold aſhes I atteſt, and call
" To witneſs for myſelf, that in their fall
" No foes, or death, nor danger I declin'd,
" Did and deſerv'd no leſs, my fate to find."

From this kind of concatenated metre he afterwards refrained, and taught his followers the art of concluding their ſenſe in couplets; which has perhaps been with rather too much conſtancy purſued.

This paſſage exhibits one of thoſe triplets which are not infrequent in this firſt eſſay, but which it is to be ſuppoſed his maturer judgement diſapproved, ſince in his latter works he has totally forborn them.

His rhymes are ſuch as ſeem found without difficulty, by following the ſenſe; and are for the moſt part as exact

exact at leaſt as thoſe of other poets, though now and then the reader is ſhifted off with what he can get.

"O how *transform'd!*
"How much unlike that Hector, who *return'd*
"Clad in Achilles' ſpoils!

And again:

"From thence a thouſand leſſer poets *ſprung*,
"Like petty princes from the fall of *Rome*."

Sometimes the weight of rhyme is laid upon a word too feeble to ſuſtain it:

"Troy confounded falls
"From all her glories: if it might have ſtood
"By any power, by this right hand it *ſhou'd*.
"—And though my outward ſtate misfortune *hath*
"Depreſt thus low, it cannot reach my faith."
"—Thus by his fraud and our own faith o'ercome,
"A feigned tear deſtroys us, againſt *whom*
"Tydides nor Achilles could prevail,
"Nor ten years conflict, nor a thouſand ſail."

He is not very careful to vary the ends of his verſes: in one paſſage the word *die* rhimes three couplets in ſix.

Moſt of theſe petty faults are in his firſt productions, when he was leſs ſkilful, or at leaſt leſs dexterous in the uſe of words; and though they had been more frequent they could only have leſſened the grace, not the ſtrength of his compoſition. He is one of the writers that improved our taſte, and advanced our language, and whom we ought therefore to read with gratitude, though, having done much, he left much to do.

MILTON.

THE Life of Milton has been already written in ſo many forms, and with ſuch minute enquiry, that I might perhaps more properly have contented myſelf with the addition of a few notes to Mr. Fenton's elegant Abridgement, but that a new narrative was thought neceſſary to the uniformity of this edition.

JOHN MILTON was by birth a gentleman, deſcended from the proprietors of Milton near Thame in Oxfordſhire, one of whom forfeited his eſtate in the times of York and Lancaſter. Which ſide he took I know not; his deſcendant inherited no veneration for the White Roſe.

His grandfather John was keeper of the foreſt of Shotover, a zealous papiſt, who diſinherited his ſon, becauſe he had forſaken the religion of his anceſtors.

His father, John, who was the ſon diſinherited, had recourſe for his ſupport to the profeſſion of a ſcrivener. He

; a man eminent for his ſkill in muſick *, many
ompoſitions being ſtill to be found; and his re-
n in his profeſſion was ſuch, that he grew rich,
ired to an eſtate. He had probably more than
n literature, as his ſon addreſſes him in one of
ſt elaborate Latin poems. He married a gen-
an of the name of Caſton, a Welſh family, by
he had two ſons, John the poet, and Chriſtopher
idied the law, and adhered, as the law taught
) the King's party, for which he was awhile per-
; but having, by his brother's intereſt, obtained
ion to live in quiet, he ſupported himſelf ſo ho-
ly by chamber-practice, that ſoon after the acceſ-
King James, he was knighted and made a Judge;
s conſtitution being too weak for buſineſs, he re-
efore any diſreputable compliances became ne-
†.

had likewiſe a daughter Anne, whom he married
conſiderable fortune to Edward Philips, who
rom Shrewſbury, and roſe in the Crown-office to
ndary: by him ſhe had two ſons, John and Ed-
, who were educated by the poet, and from
whom

eed ſo eminent as to rank among the firſt practical com-
n his time. Philips, mentioned in the next page, ſays,
a compoſition of his he was preſented by a Poliſh prince
gold medal and chain. An anthem of his compoſing may
in "The General Hiſtory of the Science and Practice of
, 4to." 1776, vol. III. page 369.

a judge he was not eminent; not a ſingle dictum of his is
l in any report book of his time; nor does his name appear
ong thoſe of the other judges to the allowance of Carter's,
ther volume or two of contemporary reports.

s from the latter of theſe two perſons alone, that we derive
ticulars of Milton's domeſtic manners, and theſe are ex-

whom is derived the only authentick account of his domeſtic manners.

John, the poet, was born in his father's houſe, at the Spread-Eagle in Bread-ſtreet, Dec. 9, 1608, between ſix and ſeven in the morning. His father appears to have been very ſolicitous about his education; for he was inſtructed at firſt by private tuition under the care of Thomas Young, who was afterwards chaplain to the Engliſh merchants at Hamburgh; and of whom we have reaſon to think well, ſince his ſcholar conſidered him as worthy of an epiſtolary Elegy.

He was then ſent to St. Paul's Scool, under the care of Mr. Gill; and removed, in the beginning of his

hibited in a life of him prefixed to a tranſlation of his "State Let-"ters, 1694, 12mo." The two perſons abovementioned were men of literature, and are noticed by Wood. Edward, after having been a ſtudent of Magdalen hall, Oxford, became tutor to the ſon of Mr. John Evelyn, of Say's court, and after that to the ſons of ſundry perſons of quality, and alſo to Iſabella, the daughter of lord Arlington, afterwards ducheſs of Grafton; but at length he took up the trade of a writer and tranſlator of books for a livelihood. Among other works he compiled a Dictionary, entitled, "A "new World of Words," which, till the publication of Bailey's, might be deemed the beſt in our language: he was alſo the continuator of "Sir Richard Baker's Chronicle" to the reſtoration of Charles II. and, having the uſe of the duke of Albemarle's papers, has related the occurrences of that great event, but in a way that gave great offence to biſhop Nicolſon, who, with his uſual aſperity, aſſerts that ambition and flattery carried him beyond truth and his copy. He appears to have been a friend to the royal cauſe; but his brother John inherited the political, though not the religious principles of his uncle: he wrote "Maronides, or two "books of Virgil tranſlated into burleſque verſe," pamphlets, and ſundry others of ſmall account at this day, and is thus deſcribed by Wood: "A man of very loſe principles, atheiſtical, forſakes "his wife and children, makes no proviſion for them." Athen. Oxon. 2d edit. vol. II. 1119, et ſeq.

ſixteenth

ſixteenth year, to Chriſt's College in Cambridge, where he entered a ſizar, Feb. 12, 1624.

He was at this time eminently ſkilled in the Latin tongue; and he himſelf, by annexing the dates to his firſt compoſitions, a boaſt of which the learned *Politian* had given him an example, ſeems to commend the earlineſs of his own proficiency to the notice of poſterity. But the products of his vernal fertility have been ſurpaſſed by many, and particularly by his contemporary Cowley. Of the powers of the mind it is difficult to form an eſtimate: many have excelled Milton in their firſt eſſays, who never roſe to works like *Paradiſe Loſt*.

At fifteen, a date which he uſes till he is ſixteen, he tranſlated or verſified two Pſalms, 114 and 136, which he thought worthy of the publick eye; but they raiſe no great expectations: they would in any numerous ſchool have obtained praiſe, but not excited wonder.

Many of his elegies appear to have been written in his eighteenth year, by which it appears that he had then read the Roman authors with very nice diſcernment. I once heard Mr. Hampton, the tranſlator of Polybius, remark what I think is true, that Milton was the firſt Engliſhman who, after the revival of letters, wrote Latin verſes with claſſick elegance. If any exceptions can be made, they are very few: Haddon and Aſcham, the pride of Elizabeth's reign, however they may have ſucceeded in proſe, no ſooner attempt verſes than they provoke deriſion. If we produced any thing worthy of notice before the elegies of Milton, it was perhaps *Alabaſter's Roxana*.

Of theſe exerciſes which the rules of the Univerſity required, ſome were publiſhed by him in his maturer years. They had been undoubtedly applauded; for

they were ſuch as few can perform: yet there is reaſon to ſuſpect that he was regarded in his college with no great fondneſs. That he obtained no fellowſhip is certain; but the unkindneſs with which he was treated was not merely negative. I am aſhamed to relate what I fear is true, that Milton was one of the laſt ſtudents in either univerſity that ſuffered the publick indignity of corporal correction.

It was, in the violence of controverſial hoſtility, objected to him, that he was expelled: this he ſteadily denies, and it was apparently not true; but it ſeems plain from his own verſes to *Diodati*, that he had incurred *Ruſtication*; a temporary diſmiſſion into the country, with perhaps the loſs of a term:

Me tenet urbs refluâ quam Thameſis alluit undâ,
  Meque nec invitum patria dulcis habet.
Jam nec arundiferum mihi cura reviſere Camum,
  Nec dudum *vetiti* me *laris* angit amor.—
Nec duri libet uſque minas perferre magiſtri,
  Cæteraque ingenio non ſubeunda meo.
Si ſit hoc *exilium* patrias adiiſſe penates,
  Et vacuum curis otia grata ſequi,
Non ego vel *profugi* nomen ſortemve recuſo,
  Lætus et *exilii* conditione fruor.

I cannot find any meaning but this, which even kindneſs and reverence can give to the term, *vetiti laris*, "a habitation from which he is excluded;" or how *exile* can be otherwiſe interpreted. He declares yet more, that he is weary of enduring *the threats of a rigorous maſter, and ſomething elſe, which a temper like his cannot undergo.* What was more than threat was probably puniſhment. This poem, which mentions his *exile*, proves likewiſe that it was not perpetual; for it

concludes with a reſolution of returning ſome time to Cambridge. And it may be conjectured from the willingneſs with which he has perpetuated the memory of his exile, that its cauſe was ſuch as gave him no ſhame.

He took both the uſual degrees; that of Batchelor in 1628, and that of Maſter in 1632; but he left the univerſity with no kindneſs for its inſtitution, alienated either by the injudicious ſeverity of his governors, or his own captious perverſeneſs. The cauſe cannot now be known, but the effect appears in his writings. His ſcheme of education, inſcribed to *Hartlib*, ſuperſedes all academical inſtruction, being intended to compriſe the whole time which men uſually ſpend in literature, from their entrance upon grammar, *till they proceed, as it is called, maſters of arts.* And in his Diſcourſe *on the likelieſt Way to remove Hirelings out of the Church*, he ingeniouſly propoſes, that *the profits of the lands forfeited by the act for ſuperſtitious uſes, ſhould be applied to ſuch academies all over the land, where languages and arts may be taught together; ſo that youth may be at once brought up, to a competency of learning and an honeſt trade, by which means ſuch of them as had the gift, being enabled to ſupport themſelves (without tithes) by the latter, may, by the help of the former, become worthy preachers.*

One of his objections to academical education, as it was then conducted, is, that men deſigned for orders in the Church were permitted to act plays, *writhing and unboning their clergy limbs to all the antick and diſhoneſt geſtures of Trincalos, buffoons and bawds, proſtituting the ſhame of that miniſtry which they had, or were near having, to the eyes of courtiers and courtladies, their grooms and mademoiſelles* *. This

* This paſſage, it may be ſuppoſed, was a cenſure of the practice of acting plays in the univerſities, of which the inſtances are many.

This is ſufficiently peeviſh in a man, who, when he mentions his exile from the college, relates, with great luxuriance, the compenſation which the pleaſures of the theatre afford him. Plays were therefore only criminal when they were acted by academicks.

He went to the univerſity with a deſign of entering into the church, but in time altered his mind; for he declared, that whoever became a clergyman muſt "ſubſcribe ſlave, and take an oath withal, which, unleſs "he took with a conſcience that could retch, he muſt "ſtraight perjure himſelf. He thought it better to "prefer a blameleſs ſilence before the office of ſpeak-"ing, bought and begun with ſervitude and for-"ſwearing."

Theſe expreſſions are, I find, applied to the ſubſcription of the Articles; but it ſeems more probable that they relate to canonical obedience. I know not any of the Articles which ſeem to thwart his opinions: but the thoughts of obedience, whether canonical or civil, raiſed his indignation.

His unwillingneſs to engage in the miniſtry, perhaps not yet advanced to a ſettled reſolution of declining it, appears in a letter to one of his friends, who had reproved his ſuſpended and dilatory life, which he ſeems to have imputed to an inſatiable curioſity, and fantaſtick luxury of various knowledge. To this he writes a cool

In 1566 was repreſented before queen Elizabeth in the hall of Chriſt-church college, Oxford, by the ſcholars thereof, the comedy of Palemon and Arcite, written by Richard Edwards, maſter of the royal chapel children; and afterwards, before king James I. at Trinity college, Cambridge, the comedy of Ignoramus. And later than that, viz. in 1630, was acted before the king and queen, in the hall of St. John's in Oxford, a play entitled Love's Hoſpital, by the ſcholars of that college.

and

and plauſible anſwer, in which he endeavours to perſuade him that the delay proceeds not from the delights of deſultory ſtudy, but from the deſire of obtaining more fitneſs for his taſk; and that he goes on, *not taking thought of being late, ſo it give advantage to be more fit.*

When he left the univerſity, he returned to his father, then reſiding at Horton in Buckinghamſhire, with whom he lived five years; in which time he is ſaid to have read all the Greek and Latin writers. With what limitations this univerſality is to be underſtood, who ſhall inform us?

It might be ſuppoſed that he who read ſo much ſhould have done nothing elſe; but Milton found time to write the Maſque of *Comus*, which was preſented at Ludlow, then the reſidence of the Lord Preſident of Wales, in 1634; and had the honour of being acted by the Earl of Bridgewater's ſons and daughter. The fiction is derived from Homer's *Circe* *; but we never can

* It has nevertheleſs its foundation in reality. The earl of Bridgewater being preſident of Wales in the year 1634, had his reſidence at Ludlow caſtle in Shropſhire, at which time lord Brackly and Mr. Egerton his ſons, and lady Alice Egerton his daughter, paſſing through a place called the Hay-wood foreſt, or Haywood in Herefordſhire, were benighted, and the lady for a ſhort time loſt: this accident being related to their father upon their arrival at his caſtle, Milton, at the requeſt of his friend Henry Lawes who taught muſic in the family, wrote this maſque. Lawes ſet it to muſic, and it was acted on Michaelmas night; the two brothers, the young lady, and Lawes himſelf, bearing each a part in the repreſentation.

The lady Alice Egerton became afterwards the wife of the earl of Carbury, who at his ſeat called Golden-grove, in Caermarthenſhire, harbored Dr. Jeremy Taylor in the time of the Uſurpation. Among the doctor's ſermons is one on her death, in which her character is finely pourtrayed. Her ſiſter, lady Mary, was given in marriage to lord Herbert of Cherbury.

can refuſe to any modern the liberty of borrowing from Homer:

———a quo ceu fonte perenni
Vatum Pieriis ora rigantur aquis.

His next production was *Lycidas*, an elegy, written in 1637, on the death of Mr. King, the ſon of Sir John King, ſecretary for Ireland in the time of Elizabeth, James, and Charles. King was much a favourite at Cambridge, and many of the wits joined to do honour to his memory. Milton's acquaintance with the Italian writers may be diſcovered by a mixture of longer and ſhorter verſes, according to the rules of Tuſcan poetry, and his malignity to the Church by ſome lines which are interpreted as threatening its extermination.

He is ſuppoſed about this time to have written his *Arcades*; for while he lived at Horton he uſed ſometimes to ſteal from his ſtudies a few days, which he ſpent at Harefield, the houſe of the counteſs dowager of Derby, where the *Arcades* made part of a dramatick entertainment.

He began now to grow weary of the country; and had ſome purpoſe of taking chambers in the Inns of Court, when the death of his mother ſet him at liberty to travel, for which he obtained his father's conſent, and Sir Henry Wotton's directions, with the celebrated

Notwithſtanding Dr. Johnſon's aſſertion, that the fiction is derived from Homer's Circe, it may be conjectured, that it was rather taken from the Comus of Erycius Puteanus, in which, under the fiction of a dream, the character of Comus and his attendants are delineated, and the exploits of the zealots expoſed and reprobated. This little tract was publiſhed at Louvain in 1611, and afterwards at Oxford in 1634, the very year in which Milton's Comus was written.

precept

precept of prudence, *i penſieri ſtretti, ed il viſo ſciolto*; "thoughts cloſe, and looks looſe."

In 1638 he left England, and went firſt to Paris; where, by the favour of Lord *Scudamore*, he had the opportunity of viſiting *Grotius*, then reſiding at the French court as ambaſſador from Chriſtina of Sweden. From Paris he haſted into Italy, of which he had with particular diligence ſtudied the language and literature: and, though he ſeems to have intended a very quick perambulation of the country, ſtaid two months at Florence; where he found his way into the academies, and produced his compoſitions with ſuch applauſe as appears to have exalted him in his own opinion, and confirmed him in the hope, that, "by labour and in-"tenſe ſtudy, which," ſays he, "I take to be my "portion in this life, joined with a ſtrong propenſity "of nature," he might "leave ſomething ſo written "to after-times, as they ſhould not willingly let it "die."

It appears, in all his writings, that he had the uſual concomitant of great abilities, a lofty and ſteady confidence in himſelf, perhaps not without ſome contempt of others; for ſcarcely any man ever wrote ſo much, and praiſed ſo few. Of his praiſe he was very frugal; as he ſet its value high, and conſidered his mention of a name as a ſecurity againſt the waſte of time, and a certain preſervation from oblivion.

At Florence he could not indeed complain that his merit wanted diſtinction. Carlo Dati preſented him with an encomiaſtick inſcription, in the tumid lapidary ſtyle; and Francini wrote him an ode, of which the firſt ſtanza is only empty noiſe; the reſt are perhaps too diffuſe on common topicks: but the laſt is natural *and beautiful*,

From

From Florence he went to Sienna, and from Sienna to Rome, where he was again received with kindneſs by the Learned and the Great. Holſtenius, the keeper of the Vatican Library, who had reſided three years at Oxford, introduced him to Cardinal Barberini: and he, at a muſical entertainment, waited for him at the door, and led him by the hand into the aſſembly*. Here Selvaggi praiſed him in a diſtich, and Salſilli in a tetraſtick: neither of them of much value. The Italians were gainers by this literary commerce; for the encomiums with which Milton repaid Salſilli, though not ſecure againſt a ſtern grammarian, turn the balance indiſputably in Milton's favour.

Of theſe Italian teſtimonies, poor as they are, he was proud enough to publiſh them before his poems; though he ſays, he cannot be ſuſpected but to have known that they were ſaid *non tam de ſe, quam ſupra ſe.*

At Rome, as at Florence, he ſtaid only two months; a time indeed ſufficient, if he deſired only to ramble with an explainer of its antiquities, or to view palaces and count pictures; but certainly too ſhort for the contemplation of learning, policy, or manners.

From Rome he paſſed on to Naples, in company of a hermit; a companion from whom little could be expected, yet to him Milton owed his introduction to Manſo marquis of Villa, who had been before the patron of

* Here it is conjectured that Milton heard Leonora Baroni ſing, a lady whom he has honoured with three Latin epigrams. She and her ſiſter Adriana of Mantua celebrated for her beauty and exquiſite hand on the lute, were deemed the fineſt ſingers in the world. A volume of poems in Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and Spaniſh, in praiſe of Leonora, was publiſhed at Rome; and there is a fine eulogium on her in the Diſcours ſur la muſique d' Italie, printed with the life of Malherbe. Vide Bayle, Art. BARONI. Gen. Hiſt. of the Science and Practice of Muſic, vol. IV. page 176.

Taſſo. Manſo was enough delighted with his accompliſhments to honour him with a ſorry diſtich, in which he commends him for every thing but his religion; and Milton, in return, addreſſed him in a Latin poem, which muſt have raiſed an high opinion of Engliſh elegance and literature.

His purpoſe was now to have viſited Sicily and Greece; but, hearing of the differences between the king and parliament, he thought it proper to haſten home, rather than paſs his life in foreign amuſements while his countrymen were contending for their rights. He therefore came back to Rome, though the merchants informed him of plots laid againſt him by the Jeſuits, for the liberty of his converſations on religion. He had ſenſe enough to judge that there was no danger, and therefore kept on his way, and acted as before, neither obtruding nor ſhunning controverſy. He had perhaps given ſome offence by viſiting Galileo, then a priſoner in the Inquiſition for philoſophical hereſy; and at Naples he was told by Manſo, that, by his declarations on religious queſtions, he had excluded himſelf from ſome diſtinctions which he ſhould otherwiſe have paid him. But ſuch conduct, though it did not pleaſe, was yet ſufficiently ſafe; and Milton ſtaid two months more at Rome, and went on to Florence without moleſtation.

From Florence he viſited Lucca. He afterwards went to Venice; and having ſent away a collection of muſick and other books, travelled to Geneva, which he probably conſidered as the metropolis of orthodoxy.

Here he repoſed, as in a congenial element, and became acquainted with John Diodati and Frederick Spanheim, two learned profeſſors of Divinity. From Geneva

Geneva he paſſed through France; and came home, after an abſence of a year and three months.

At his return he heard of the death of his friend Charles Diodati; a man whom it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe of great merit, ſince he was thought by Milton worthy of a poem, intituled, *Epitaphium Damonis*, written with the common but childiſh imitation of paſtoral life.

He now hired a lodging at the houſe of one Ruſſel, a taylor in St. Bride's Church-yard, and undertook the education of John and Edward Philips, his ſiſter's ſons. Finding his rooms too little, he took a houſe and garden in Alderſgate-ſtreet *, which was not then ſo much out of the world as it is now; and choſe his dwelling at the upper end of a paſſage, that he might avoid the noiſe of the ſtreet. Here he received more boys, to be boarded and inſtructed.

Let not our veneration for Milton forbid us to look with ſome degree of merriment on great promiſes and ſmall performance, on the man who haſtens home, becauſe his countrymen are contending for their liberty, and, when he reaches the ſcene of action, vapours away his patriotiſm in a private boarding-ſchool. This is the period of his life from which all his biographers ſeem inclined to ſhrink. They are unwilling that Milton

* This is inaccurately expreſſed: Philips, and Dr. Newton after him, ſay a garden houſe, i. e. a houſe ſituate in a garden, and of which there were eſpecially in the north ſuburbs of London very many, if not few elſe. The term is technical, and frequently occurs in the Athen. and Faſt. Oxon. The meaning thereof may be collected from
icle Thomas Farnabe, the famous ſchoolmaſter, of whom the
s, that he taught in Goldſmith's Rents, in Cripplegate pa-
nd Redcroſs-ſtreet, where were large gardens and handſome
lton's houſe in Jewin-ſtreet was alſo a garden-houſe;
ed moſt of his dwellings after his ſettlement in London.

ſhould

ſhould be degraded to a ſchool-maſter; but, ſince it cannot be denied that he taught boys, one finds out that he taught for nothing, and another that his motive was only zeal for the propagation of learning and virtue; and all tell what they do not know to be true, only to excuſe an act which no wiſe man will conſider as in itſelf diſgraceful. His father was alive; his allowance was not ample; and he ſupplied its deficiences by an honeſt and uſeful employment.

It is told, that in the art of education he performed wonders; and a formidable liſt is given of the authors, Greek and Latin, that were read in Alderſgate-ſtreet, by youth between ten and fifteen or ſixteen years of age. Thoſe who tell or receive theſe ſtories ſhould conſider that nobody can be taught faſter than he can learn. The ſpeed of the horſeman muſt be limited by the power of his horſe. Every man, that has ever undertaken to inſtruct others, can tell what ſlow advances he has been able to make, and how much patience it requires to recall vagrant inattention, to ſtimulate ſluggiſh indifference, and to rectify abſurd miſapprehenſion.

The purpoſe of Milton, as it ſeems, was to teach ſomething more ſolid than the common literature of Schools, by reading thoſe authors that treat of phyſical ſubjects; ſuch as the Georgick, and aſtronomical treatiſes of the ancients. This was a ſcheme of improvement which ſeems to have buſied many literary projectors of that age. Cowley, who had more means than Milton of knowing what was wanting to the embelliſhments of life, formed the ſame plan of education in his imaginary College.

But the truth is, that the knowledge of external nature, and the ſciences which that knowledge requires or includes,

includes, are not the great or the frequent business of the human mind. Whether we provide for action or conversation, whether we wish to be useful or pleasing, the first requisite is the religious and moral knowledge of right and wrong; the next is an acquaintance with the history of mankind, and with those examples which may be said to embody truth, and prove by events the reasonableness of opinions. Prudence and Justice are virtues, and excellences, of all times and of all places; we are perpetually moralists, but we are geometricians only by chance. Our intercourse with intellectual nature is necessary; our speculations upon matter are voluntary, and at leisure. Physiological learning is of such rare emergence, that one man may know another half his life without being able to estimate his skill in hydrostaticks or astronomy; but his moral and prudential character immediately appears.

Those authors, therefore, are to be read at schools that supply most axioms of prudence, most principles of moral truth, and most materials for conversation; and these purposes are best served by poets, orators, and historians.

Let me not be censured for this digression as pedantick or paradoxical; for if I have Milton against me, I have Socrates on my side. It was his labour to turn philosophy from the study of nature to speculations upon life; but the innovators whom I oppose are turning off attention from life to nature. They seem to think, that we are placed here to watch the growth of plants, or the motions of the stars. Socrates was rather of opinion, that what we had to learn was, how to do good, and avoid evil.

Ὅ[illegible]

Of

Of inſtitutions we may judge by their effects. From this wonder-working academy, I do not know that there ever proceeded any man very eminent for knowledge: its only genuine product, I believe, is a ſmall Hiſtory of Poetry, written in Latin by his nephew Philips, of which perhaps none of my readers has ever heard.

That in his ſchool, as in every thing elſe which he undertook, he laboured with great diligence, there is no reaſon for doubting. One part of his method deſerves general imitation. He was careful to inſtruct his ſcholars in religion. Every Sunday was ſpent upon theology, of which he dictated a ſhort ſyſtem, gathered from the writers that were then faſhionable in the Dutch univerſities.

He ſet his pupils an example of hard ſtudy and ſpare diet; only now and then he allowed himſelf to paſs a day of feſtivity and indulgence with ſome gay gentlemen of Gray's Inn.

He now began to engage in the controverſies of the times, and lent his breath to blow the flames of contention. In 1641 he publiſhed a treatiſe of *Reformation*, in two books, againſt the eſtabliſhed Church; being willing to help the Puritans, who were, he ſays *inferior to the Prelates in learning*.

Hall, biſhop of Norwich, had publiſhed an *Humble Remonſtrance*, in defence of Epiſcopacy; to which, in 1641, ſix miniſters, of whoſe names the firſt letters made the celebrated word *Smectymnuus*, gave their Anſwer. Of this Anſwer a Confutation was attempted by the learned *Uſher*; and to the Confutation Milton publiſhed a Reply, intituled, *Of Prelatical Epiſcopacy, and whether it may be deduced from the Apoſtolical Times, by virtue of thoſe teſtimonies which are alledged to that pur-*

poſe in ſome late treatiſes, one whereof goes under the of James Lord Biſhop of Armagh.

I have tranſcribed this title, to ſhew, by hi temptuous mention of Uſher, that he had now ac the puritanical ſavageneſs of manners. His next was, *The Reaſon of Church Government urged a Prelacy, by Mr. John Milton*, 1642. In this bo diſcovers, not with oſtentatious exultation, bu calm confidence, his high opinion of his own po and promiſes to undertake ſomething, he yet not what, that may be of uſe and honour to his try. "This," ſays he, "is not to be obtain "by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit that c "rich with all utterance and knowledge, and ſen "his Seraphim with the hallowed fire of his al "touch and purify the lips of whom he pleaſe "this muſt be added, induſtrious and ſelect re "ſteady obſervation, and inſight into all ſeem "generous arts and affairs; till which in ſome m "be compaſt, I refuſe not to ſuſtain this expect From a promiſe like this, at once fervid, pious, tional, might be expected the *Paradiſe Loſt*.

He publiſhed the ſame year two more pam upon the ſame queſtion. To one of his anta who affirms that he was *vomited out of the univer* anſwers, in general terms; "The Fellows "College wherein I ſpent ſome years, at my p "after I had taken two degrees, as the ma "ſignified many times how much better it wou "tent them that I ſhould ſtay.—As for the c "approbation or diſlike of that place, as no "that I ſhould eſteem or diſeſteem myſelf the m "that, too ſimple is the anſwerer, if he think

" tain with me. Of ſmall practice were the phyſician " who could not judge, by what ſhe and her ſiſter have " of long time vomited, that the worſer ſtuff ſhe ſtrongly " keeps in her ſtomach, but the better ſhe is ever " kecking at, and is queaſy; ſhe vomits now out of " ſickneſs; but before it will be well with her, ſhe " muſt vomit with ſtrong phyſick. The univerſity, in " the time of her better health, and my younger judge- " ment, I never greatly admired, but now much leſs."

This is ſurely the language of a man who thinks that he has been injured. He proceeds to deſcribe the courſe of his conduct, and the train of his thoughts; and, becauſe he has been ſuſpected of incontinence, gives an account of his own purity: " That if I be " juſtly charged," ſays he, " with this crime, it may " come upon me with tenfold ſhame."

The ſtyle of his piece is rough, and ſuch perhaps was that of his antagoniſt. This roughneſs he juſtifies, by great examples, in a long digreſſion. Sometimes he tries to be humourous: " Leſt I ſhould take him " for ſome chaplain in hand, ſome ſquire of the body " to his prelate, one who ſerves not at the altar only " but at the Court-cupboard, he will beſtow on us a " pretty model of himſelf; and ſets me out half a " dozen ptiſical mottos, wherever he had them, hop- " ping ſhort in the meaſure of convulſion fits; in " which labour the agony of his wit having ſcaped " narrowly, inſtead of well ſized periods, he greets us " with a quantity of thumb-ring poſies.—And thus " ends this ſection, or rather diſſection of himſelf." Such is the controverſial merriment of Milton; his gloomy ſerioufneſs is yet more offenſive. Such is his malignity, *that hell grows darker at his frown.*

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His father, after Reading was taken by the *Scots*, came to reſide in his houſe; and his ſchool was raiſed. At Whitſuntide, in his thirty-fifth year, he married Mary, the daughter of Mr. Powel, a juſtice of the peace in Oxfordſhire. He brought her to town with him, and expected all the advantages of a conjugal life. The lady, however, ſeems not much to have delighted in the pleaſures of ſpare diet and hard ſtudy; for, as Philips relates, "having for a month led a philoſophic "life, after having been uſed at home to a great houſe, "and much company and joviality, her friends, poſſibly "by her own deſire, made earneſt ſuit to have her com- "pany the remaining part of the ſummer; which was "granted, upon a promiſe of her return at Mi- "chaelmas."

Milton was too buſy to much miſs his wife: he purſued his ſtudies; and now and then viſited the Lady Margaret Leigh, whom he has mentioned in one of his ſonnets. At laſt Michaelmas arrived; but the Lady had no inclination to return to the ſullen gloom of her huſband's habitation, and therefore very willingly forgot her promiſe. He ſent her a letter, but had no anſwer; he ſent more with the ſame ſucceſs. It could be alleged that letters miſcarry; he therefore diſpatched a meſſenger, being by this time too angry to go himſelf. His meſſenger was ſent back with ſome contempt. The family of the Lady were Cavaliers.

In a man whoſe opinion of his own merit was like Milton's, leſs provocation than this might have raiſed violent reſentment. Milton ſoon determined to repudiate her for diſobedience; and, being one of thoſe who could eaſily find arguments to juſtify inclination,

pub-

publiſhed (in 1644) *The Doctrine and Diſcipline of Divorce*; which was followed by *The Judgement of Martin Bucer, concerning Divorce*; and the next year, his Tetrachordon, *Expoſitions upon the four chief Places of Scripture which treat of Marriage.*

This innovation was oppoſed, as might be expected, by the clergy, who, then holding their famous aſſembly at Weſtminſter, procured that the author ſhould be called before the Lords; "but that Houſe," ſays Wood, "whether approving the doctrine, or not "favouring his accuſers, did ſoon diſmiſs him."

There ſeems not to have been much written againſt him, nor any thing by any writer of eminence. The antagoniſt that appeared is ſtyled by him, *a Serving man turned Solicitor*. *Howel* in his letters mentions the new doctrine with contempt; and it was, I ſuppoſe, thought more worthy of deriſion than of confutation. He complains of this neglect in two ſonnets, of which the firſt is contemptible, and the ſecond not excellent.

From this time it is obſerved that he became an enemy to the Preſbyterians, whom he had favoured before. He that changes his party by his humour, is not more virtuous than he that changes it by his intereſt; he loves himſelf rather than truth.

His wife and her relations now found that Milton was not an unreſiſting ſufferer of injuries; and perceiving that he had begun to put his doctrine in practice, by courting a young woman of great accompliſhments, the daughter of one Doctor Davis, who was however not ready to comply, they reſolved to endeavour a reunion. He went ſometimes to the houſe of one Blackborough, his relation, in the lane of St. Martin's-le-Grand, and at one of his uſual viſits was ſurpriſed to

ſee his wife come from another room, and implore forgiveneſs on her knees. He reſiſted her intreaties for a while; "but partly," ſays Philips, "his own ge-"nerous nature, more inclinable to reconciliation than "to perſeverance in anger or revenge, and partly the "ſtrong interceſſion of friends on both ſides, ſoon "brought him to an act of oblivion and a firm league "of peace." It were injurious to omit, that Milton afterwards received her father and her brothers in his own houſe, when they were diſtreſſed, with other Royaliſts.

He publiſhed about the ſame time his *Areopagitica, a Speech of Mr.* John Milton *for the liberty of unlicenſed Printing*. The danger of ſuch unbounded liberty, and the danger of bounding it, have produced a problem in the ſcience of Government, which human underſtanding ſeems hitherto unable to ſolve. If nothing may be publiſhed but what civil authority ſhall have previouſly approved, power muſt always be the ſtandard of truth; if every dreamer of innovations may propagate his projects, there can be no ſettlement; if every murmurer at government may diffuſe diſcontent, there can be no peace; and if every ſceptick in theology may teach his follies, there can be no religion. The remedy againſt theſe evils is to puniſh the authors; for it is yet allowed that every ſociety may puniſh, though not prevent, the publication of opinions, which that ſociety ſhall think pernicious; but this puniſhment, though it may cruſh the author, promotes the book; and it ſeems not more reaſonable to leave the right of printing unreſtrained, becauſe writers may be afterwards cenſured, than it would be to ſleep with doors

ors unbolted, becauſe by our laws we can hang a ef.

But whatever were his engagements, civil or do-ſtic, poetry was never long out of his thoughts. About this time (1645) a collection of his Latin and ıgliſh poems appeared, in which the *Allegro* and *nſeroſo*, with ſome others, were firſt publiſhed.

He had taken a larger houſe in Barbican for the re-ption of ſcholars; but the numerous relations of his fe, to whom he generouſly granted refuge for a hile, occupied his rooms. In time, however, they ent away; "and the houſe again," ſays Philips, now looked like a houſe of the Muſes only, though the acceſſion of ſcholars was not great. Poſſibly his having proceeded ſo far in the education of youth, may have been the occaſion of his adverſaries calling him pedagogue and ſchool-maſter; whereas it is well known he never ſet up for a publick ſchool, to teach all the young fry of a pariſh; but only was willing to impart his learning and knowledge to relations, and the ſons of gentlemen who were his intimate friends; and that neither his writings nor his way of teaching ſavoured in the leaſt of pedantry."

Thus laborioufly does his nephew extenuate what annot be denied, and what might be confeſſed without diſgrace. Milton was not a man who could beome mean by a mean employment. This, however, is warmeſt friends ſeem not to have found; they therefore ſhift and palliate. He did not ſell literature to all omers at an open ſhop; he was a chamber-milliner, nd meaſured his commodities to his friends.

Philips, evidently impatient of viewing him in this ſtate of degradation, tells us that it was not long continued; and, to raiſe his character again, has a mind to inveſt him with military ſplendour: "He is much "miſtaken," he ſays, "if there was not about this "time a deſign of making him an adjutant-general in "Sir William Waller's army. But the new-modelling "of the army proved an obſtruction to the deſign." An event cannot be ſet at a much greater diſtance than by having been only *deſigned, about ſome time*, if a man *be not much miſtaken*. Milton ſhall be a pedagogue no longer; for, if Philips be not much miſtaken, ſomebody at ſome time deſigned him for a ſoldier.

About the time that the army was new-modelled (1645) he removed to a ſmaller houſe in Holbourn, which opened backward into Lincoln's-Inn-Fields. He is not known to have publiſhed any thing afterwards till the King's death, when, finding his murderers condemned by the Preſbyterians, he wrote a treatiſe to juſtify it, and *to compoſe the minds of the people*.

He made ſome *Remarks on the Articles of Peace between Ormond and the Iriſh Rebels*. While he contented himſelf to write, he perhaps did only what his conſcience dictated; and if he did not very vigilantly watch the influence of his own paſſions, and the gradual prevalence of opinions, firſt willingly admitted and then habitually indulged; if objections, by being overlooked, were forgotten, and deſire ſuperinduced conviction; he yet ſhared only the common weakneſs of mankind, and might be no leſs ſincere than his opponents. But as faction ſeldom leaves a man honeſt, however it might find him, Milton is ſuſpected of having

ing interpolated the book called *Icon Baſilike*, which the Council of State, to whom he was now made Latin ſecretary, employed him to cenſure, by inſerting a prayer taken from *Sidney's Arcadia*, and imputing it to the King; whom he charges, in his *Iconoclaſtes*, with the uſe of this prayer, as with a heavy crime, in the indecent language with which proſperity had emboldened the advocates for rebellion to inſult all that is venerable or great: "Who would have imagined ſo little fear in him of the true all-ſeeing Deity—as immediately before his death, to pop into the hands of the grave biſhop that attended him, as a ſpecial relique of his ſaintly exerciſes, a prayer ſtolen word for word from the mouth of a heathen woman praying to a heathen god?"

The papers which the King gave to Dr. Juxon on the ſcaffold the regicides took away, ſo that they were at leaſt the publiſhers of this prayer; and Dr. Birch, who had examined the queſtion with great care, was inclined to think them the forgers. The uſe of it by adaptation was innocent; and they who could ſo noiſily cenſure it, with a little extenſion of their malice could contrive what they wanted to accuſe.

King Charles the Second, being now ſheltered in Holland, employed Salmaſius, profeſſor of Polite Learning at Leyden, to write a defence of his father and of monarchy; and, to excite his induſtry, gave him, as was reported, a hundred Jacobuſes. Salmaſius was a man of ſkill in languages, knowledge of antiquity, and ſagacity of emendatory criticiſm, almoſt exceeding all hope of human attainment; and having, by exceſſive praiſes, been confirmed in great confidence of himſelf, though he probably had not much conſi-

dered

dered the principles of ſociety or the rights of government, undertook the employment without diſtruſt of his own qualifications; and, as his expedition in writing was wonderful, in 1649 publiſhed *Defenſio Regis*.

To this Milton was required to write a ſufficient anſwer; which he performed (1651) in ſuch a manner, that Hobbes declared himſelf unable to decide whoſe language was beſt, or whoſe arguments were worſt. In my opinion, Milton's periods are ſmoother, neater, and more pointed; but he delights himſelf with teazing his adverſary as much as with confuting him. He makes a fooliſh alluſion of Salmaſius, whoſe doctrine he conſiders as ſervile and unmanly, to the ſtream of *Salmacis*, which whoever entered left half his virility behind him. Salmaſius was a Frenchman, and was unhappily married to a ſcold. *Tu es Gallus*, ſays Milton, *et, ut aiunt, nimium gallinaceus*. But his ſupreme pleaſure is to tax his adverſary, ſo renowned for criticiſm, with vitious Latin. He opens his book with telling that he has uſed *Perſona*, which, according to Milton, ſignifies only a *Maſk*, in a ſenſe not known to the Romans, by applying it as we apply *Perſon*. But as Nemeſis is always on the watch, it is memorable that he has enforced the charge of a ſoleciſm by an expreſſion in itſelf groſly ſoleciſtical, when, for one of thoſe ſuppoſed blunders, he ſays, as *Ker*, and I think ſome one before him, has remarked, *propino te grammatiſtis tuis* vapulandum. From *vapulo*, which has a paſſive ſenſe, *vapulandus* can never be derived. No man forgets his original trade: the rights of nations, and of kings, ſink into queſtions of grammar, if grammarians diſcuſs them.

Milton

ſilton when he undertook this anſwer was weak of
y, and dim of ſight; but his will was forward, and
t was wanting of health was ſupplied by zeal. He
rewarded with a thouſand pounds, and his book
much read; for paradox, recommended by ſpirit
elegance, eaſily gains attention; and he who told
y man that he was equal to his King, could hardly
t an audience.

'hat the performance of Salmaſius was not diſperſed
ı equal rapidity, or read with equal eagerneſs,
ery credible. He taught only the ſtale doctrine of
ıority, and the unpleaſing duty of ſubmiſſion; and
ıad been ſo long not only the monarch but the ty-
of literature, that almoſt all mankind were de-
ted to find him defied and inſulted by a new name,
yet conſidered as any one's rival. If Chriſtina, as
ıid, commended the *Defence of the People*, her pur-
: muſt be to torment Salmaſius, who was then at
Court; for neither her civil ſtation nor her natural
racter could diſpoſe her to favour the doctrine, who
by birth a queen, and by temper deſpotick.

'hat Salmaſius was, from the appearance of Mil-
s book, treated with neglect, there is not much
of; but to a man ſo long accuſtomed to admiration,
tle praiſe of his antagoniſt would be ſufficiently of-
ive, and might incline him to leave Sweden, from
ch, however, he was diſmiſſed, not with any mark
ontempt, but with a train of attendance ſcarce leſs
ı regal.

He prepared a reply, which, left as it was imper-
, was publiſhed by his ſon in the year of the Re-
ration. In the beginning, being probably moſt in
ı for his Latinity, he endeavours to defend his uſe
of

of the word *perſona*; but, if I remember right, he miſſes a better authority than any that he has found, that of Juvenal in his fourth ſatire:

—Quid agis cum dira & fœdior omni
Crimine *Perſona* eſt?

As Salmaſius reproached Milton with loſing his eyes in the quarrel, Milton delighted himſelf with the belief that he had ſhortened Salmaſius's life, and both perhaps with more malignity than reaſon. Salmaſius died at the Spa, Sept. 3, 1653; and as controvertiſts are commonly ſaid to be killed by their laſt diſpute, Milton was flattered with the credit of deſtroying him.

Cromwell had now diſmiſſed the parliament by the authority of which he had deſtroyed monarchy, and commenced monarch himſelf, under the title of protector, but with kingly and more than kingly power. That his authority was lawful, never was pretended; he himſelf founded his right only in neceſſity; but Milton, having now taſted the honey of publick employment, would not return to hunger and philoſophy, but, continuing to exerciſe his office under a manifeſt uſurpation, betrayed to his power that liberty which he had defended. Nothing can be more juſt than that rebellion ſhould end in ſlavery; that he, who had juſtified the murder of his king, for ſome acts which to him ſeemed unlawful, ſhould now ſell his ſervices, and his flatteries, to a tyrant, of whom it was evident that he could do nothing lawful.

He had now been blind for ſome years; but his vigour of intellect was ſuch, that he was not diſabled to diſcharge his office of Latin ſecretary, or continue his controverſies. His mind was too eager to be diverted, and too ſtrong to be ſubdued.

About

it this time his firſt wife died in childbed, hav-
him three daughters. As he probably did not
ove her, he did not long continue the appear-
lamenting her; but after a ſhort time married
ne, the daughter of one captain Woodcock of
y; a woman doubtleſs educated in opinions
own. She died within a year, of childbirth,
diſtemper that followed it; and her huſband
d her memory with a poor ſonnet.

firſt Reply to Milton's *Defenſio Populi* was pub-
n 1651, called *Apologia pro Rege & Populo An-
contra Johannis Polypragmatici (alias Miltoni)
em deſtructivam Regis & Populi.* Of this the
was not known; but Milton and his nephew
, under whoſe name he publiſhed an anſwer ſo
orrected by him, that it might be called his
nputed it to Bramhal; and, knowing him no
o regicides, thought themſelves at liberty to
m as if they had known what they only ſuſ-

year appeared *Regii Sanguinis clamor ad Cælum.*
the author was Peter du Moulin, who was af-
prebendary of Canterbury; but Morus, or
French miniſter, having the care of its pub-
was treated as the writer by Milton in his
Secunda, and overwhelmed by ſuch violence
tive, than he began to ſhrink under the tem-
d gave his perſecutors the means of knowing
author. Du Moulin was now in great dan-
t Milton's pride operated againſt his malignity;
n he and his friends were more willing that Du
ſhould eſcape than that he ſhould be convicted
ke.

In

In this ſecond Defence he ſhews that his eloquence is not merely ſatirical; the rudeneſs of his invective is equalled by the groſſneſs of his flattery. "Deſerimur, "Cromuelle, tu ſolis ſuperes, ad te ſumma noſtrarum "rerum rediit, in te ſolo conſiſtit, inſuperabili tuæ "virtuti cedimus cuncti, nemine vel obloquente, niſi "qui æquales inæqualis ipſe honores ſibi quærit, aut "digniori conceſſos invidet, aut non intelligit nihil "eſſe in ſocietate hominum magis vel Deo gratum, "vel rationi conſentaneum, eſſe in civitate nihil æquius, "utilius, quam potiri rerum digniſſimum. Eum te "agnoſcunt omnes, Cromuelle, ea tu civis maximus "et * glorioſiſſimus, dux publici conſilii, exercitum "fortiſſimorum imperator, pater patriæ geſſiſti. Sic "tu ſpontanea bonorum omnium et animitus miſſa "voce ſalutaris."

Cæſar, when he aſſumed the perpetual dictatorſhip, had not more ſervile or more elegant flattery. A tranſlation may ſhew its ſervility; but its elegance is leſs attainable. Having expoſed the unſkilfulneſs or ſelfiſhneſs of the former government, "We were left," ſays Milton, "to ourſelves: "the whole national in-"tereſt fell into your hands. and ſubſiſts only in your "abilities. To your virtue, overpowering and reſiſt-"leſs, every man gives way, except ſome who, without "equal qualifications, aſpire to equal honours, who "envy the diſtinctions of merit greater than their own, "or who have yet to learn, that in the coalition of "human ſociety nothing is more pleaſing to God, or "more agreeable to reaſon, than that the higheſt mind

* It may be doubted whether *glorioſiſſimus* be here uſed with Milton's boaſted purity. *Res glorioſa* is an *illuſtrious thing*; but *vir gloriosus* is commonly a *braggart*, as in *miles gloriosus*. Orig. Edit.

"ſhould have the ſovereign power. Such, Sir, are "you by general confeſſion; ſuch are the things at- "chieved by you, the greateſt and moſt glorious of our "countrymen, the director of our publick councils, "the leader of unconquered armies, the father of your "country; for by that title does every good man "hail you, with ſincere and voluntary praiſe."

Next year, having defended all that wanted defence, he found leiſure to defend himſelf. He undertook his own vindication againſt More, whom he declares in his title to be juſtly called the author of the *Regii Sanguinis clamor*. In this there is no want of vehemence or eloquence, nor does he forget his wonted wit. "Morus es? an Momus? an uterque idem eſt?" He then remembers that *Morus* is Latin for a Mulberry-tree, and hints at the known transformation:

—Poma alba ferebat
Quæ poſt nigra tulit Morus.

With this piece ended his controverſies: and he from this time gave himſelf up to his private ſtudies and his civil employment.

As ſecretary to the Protector he is ſuppoſed to have written the Declaration of the reaſons for a war with Spain. His agency was conſidered as of great importance; for when a treaty with Sweden was artfully ſuſpended, the delay was publickly imputed to Mr. Milton's indiſpoſition; and the Swediſh agent was provoked to expreſs his wonder, that only one man in England could write Latin, and that man blind.

Being now forty-ſeven years old, and ſeeing himſelf diſencumbered from external interruptions, he ſeems to have recollected his former purpoſes, and to have reſumed three great works which he had planned for

for his future employment: an epick poem, the hiſtory of his country, and a dictionary of the Latin tongue.

To collect a dictionary, ſeems a work of all others leaſt practicable in a ſtate of blindneſs, becauſe it depends upon perpetual and minute inſpection and collation. Nor would Milton probably have begun it, after he had loſt his eyes; but, having had it always before him, he continued it, ſays Philips, *almoſt to his dying-day; but the papers were ſo diſcompoſed and deficient, that they could not be fitted for the preſs.* The compilers of the Latin dictionary, printed at Cambridge, had the uſe of thoſe collections in three folios; but what was their fate afterwards is not known *.

To compile a hiſtory from various authors, when they can only be conſulted by other eyes, is not eaſy, nor poſſible, but with more ſkilful and attentive help than can be commonly obtained; and it was probably the difficulty of conſulting and comparing that ſtopped Milton's narrative at the Conqueſt; a period at which

* The Cambridge Dictionary, publiſhed in 4to. 1693, is no other than a copy, with ſome ſmall additions, of that of Dr. Adam Littleton in 1685, by ſundry perſons, of whom, though their names are concealed, there is great reaſon to conjecture that Milton's nephew, Edward Philips, is one; for it is expreſsly ſaid by Wood, Faſti, vol. I. p. 266, that Milton's "Theſaurus" came to his hands, and it is aſſerted in the preface thereto, that the editors thereof had the uſe of three large folios in manuſcript, collected and digeſted into alphabetical order by Mr. John Milton.

It has been remarked, that the additions, together with the preface abovementioned, and a large part of the title of the "Cambridge Dictionary," have been incorporated and printed with the ſubſequent editions of "Littleton's Dictionary," till that of 1735. Vid. Biogr. Brit. 2985 in not. So that for aught that appears to the contrary, Philips was the laſt poſſeſſor of Milton's MS.

ffairs were not yet very intricate, nor authors very numerous.

For the ſubject of his epick poem, after much deliberation, *long chuſing, and beginning late*, he fixed upon *Paradiſe Loſt*; a deſign ſo comprehenſive, that it could be juſtified only by ſucceſs. He had once deſigned to celebrate King Arthur, as he hints in his verſes to Manſus; but *Arthur was reſerved*, ſays Fenton, *to another deſtiny* *.

It appears, by ſome ſketches of poetical projects left in manuſcript, and to be ſeen in a library at Cambridge, that he had digeſted his thoughts on this ſubject into one of thoſe wild dramas which were anciently called Myſteries; and Philips had ſeen what he terms part of a tragedy, beginning with the firſt ten lines of Satan's addreſs to the Sun. Theſe myſteries conſiſt of allegorical perſons; ſuch as *Juſtice*, *Mercy*, *Faith*. Of the tragedy or myſtery of *Paradiſe Loſt* there are two plans:

The Perſons.	The Perſons.
Michael.	Moſes.
Chorus of Angels.	Divine Juſtice, Wiſdom,
Heavenly Love.	Heavenly Love.
Lucifer.	The Evening Star, Heſ-
Adam, with the	perus.
Eve, Serpent.	Chorus of Angels.
Conſcience.	Lucifer.
Death.	Adam.

* i. e. to be the ſubject of an heroic poem, written by Sir Richard Blackmore.

Labour, Sickneſs, Diſcontent, Ignorance, with others; Faith, Hope. Charity. } Mutes.

Eve. Conſcience. Labour. Sickneſs, Diſcontent, Ignorance, Fear, Death; Faith. Hope. Charity. } Mutes.

Paradiſe Loſt.

The Perſons.

Moſes, προλογίζει, recounting how he aſſumed his true body; that it corrupts not, becauſe it is with God in the mount; declares the like with Enoch and Elijah; beſides the purity of the place, that certain pure winds, dews, and clouds, preſerve it from corruption; whence exhorts to the ſight of God; tells, they cannot ſee Adam in the ſtate of innocence, by reaſon of their ſin.

Juſtice, Mercy, Wiſdom, } debating what ſhould become of man, if he fall.

Chorus of Angels ſinging a hymn of the Creation.

ACT II.

Heavenly Love.

Evening Star.

Chorus ſing the marriage-ſong, and deſcribe Paradiſe.

ACT III.

Lucifer contriving Adam's ruin.

Chorus fears for Adam, and relates Lucifer's rebellion and fall.

ACT

ACT IV.

Adam, Eve, } fallen.
Conſcience cites them to God's examination.
Chorus bewails, and tells the good Adam has loſt.

ACT V.

Adam and Eve driven out of Paradiſe.
——— ——— ——— preſented by an angel with
Labour, Grief, Hatred, Envy, War, Famine, Peſtilence, Sickneſs, Diſcontent, Ignorance, Fear, Death, } Mutes.
To whom he gives their names. Likewiſe Winter, Heat, Tempeſt, &c.
Faith, Hope, Charity, } comfort him and inſtruct him.
Chorus briefly concludes.

Such was his firſt deſign, which could have produced only an allegory, or myſtery. The following ſketch ſeems to have attained more maturity.

Adam unparadiſed:

The angel Gabriel, either deſcending or entering; ſhewing, ſince this globe was created, his frequency as much on earth as in heaven; deſcribes Paradiſe. Next, the Chorus, ſhewing the reaſon of his coming to keep his watch in Paradiſe, after Lucifer's rebellion, by command from God; and withal expreſſing his deſire to ſee and know more concerning this excellent new creature, man. The angel Gabriel, as by his name ſignifying a prince of power, tracing Paradiſe with a more free office, paſſes by the ſtation of the Chorus, and, deſired by them, relates what he knew of man; as the creation of Eve, with their love

and marriage. After this, Lucifer appears; after his overthrow bemoans himſelf, ſeeks revenge on man. The Chorus prepare reſiſtance at his firſt approach. At laſt, after diſcourſe of enmity on either ſide, he departs: whereat the Chorus ſings of the battle and victory in heaven, againſt him and his accomplices: as before, after the firſt act, was ſung a hymn of the creation. Here again may appear Lucifer, relating and inſulting in what he had done to the deſtruction of man. Man next, and Eve having by this time been ſeduced by the Serpent, appears confuſedly covered with leaves. Conſcience, in a ſhape, accuſes him; Juſtice cites him to the place whither Jehovah called for him. In the mean while, the Chorus entertains the ſtage, and is informed by ſome angel the manner of the Fall. Here the Chorus bewails Adam's fall; Adam then and Eve return; accuſe one another; but eſpecially Adam lays the blame to his wife; is ſtubborn in his offence. Juſtice appears, reaſons with him, convinces him. The Chorus admoniſheth Adam, and bids him beware Lucifer's example of impenitence. The angel is ſent to baniſh them out of Paradiſe; but before cauſes to paſs before his eyes, in ſhapes, a maſk of all the evils of this life and world. He is humbled, relents, deſpairs; at laſt appears Mercy, comforts him, promiſes the Meſſiah; then calls in Faith, Hope, and Charity; inſtructs him; he repents, gives God the glory, ſubmits to his penalty. The Chorus briefly concludes. Compare this with the former draught.

Theſe are very imperfect rudiments of *Paradiſe Loſt*; but it is pleaſant to ſee great works in their ſeminal ſtate, pregnant with latent poſſibilities of excellence; nor could there be any more delightful entertainment than

than to trace their gradual growth and expanſion, and to obſerve how they are ſometimes ſuddenly advanced by accidental hints, and ſometimes ſlowly improved by ſteady meditation.

Invention is almoſt the only literary labour which blindneſs cannot obſtruct, and therefore he naturally ſolaced his ſolitude by the indulgence of his fancy, and the melody of his numbers. He had done what he knew to be neceſſarily previous to poetical excellence; he had made himſelf acquainted with *ſeemly arts and affairs*; his comprehenſion was extended by various knowledge, and his memory ſtored with intellectual treaſures. He was ſkilful in many languages, and had by reading and compoſition attained the full maſtery of his own. He would have wanted little help from books, had he retained the power of peruſing them.

But while his greater deſigns were advancing, having now, like many other authors, caught the love of publication, he amuſed himſelf, as he could, with little productions. He ſent to the preſs (1658) a manuſcript of Raleigh, called the *Cabinet Council*; and next year gratified his malevolence to the clergy, by a *Treatiſe of Civil Power in Eccleſiaſtical Caſes, and the Means of removing Hirelings out of the Church.*

Oliver was now dead; Richard was conſtrained to reſign: the ſyſtem of extemporary government, which had been held together only by force, naturally fell into fragments when that force was taken away; and Milton ſaw himſelf and his cauſe in equal danger. But he had ſtill hope of doing ſomething. He wrote letters, which Toland has publiſhed, to ſuch men as he thought friends to the new commonwealth; and even in the year of the Reſtoration he *bated no jot of heart or*

hope, but was fantaſtical enough to think that the nation, agitated as it was, might be ſettled by a pamphlet, called *A ready and eaſy way to eſtabliſh a Free Commonwealth*; which was, however, enough conſidered to be both ſeriouſly and ludicrouſly anſwered.

The obſtinate enthuſiaſm of the commonwealthmen was very remarkable. When the King was apparently returning, Harrington, with a few aſſociates as fanatical as himſelf, uſed to meet, with all the gravity of political importance, to ſettle an equal government by rotation *; and Milton, kicking when he could ſtrike no longer, was fooliſh enough to publiſh, a few weeks before the Reſtoration, *Notes* upon a ſermon preached by one Griffiths, intituled, *The Fear of God and the King*. To theſe notes an anſwer was written by L'Eſtrange, in a pamphlet petulantly called *No Blind Guides*.

But whatever Milton could write, or men of greater activity could do, the King was now about to be re-

* This meeting of Harrington and his aſſociates is known by the name of the Rota club; the chief members whereof were Harrington, Henry Neville, Cyriac Skinner a diſciple of Milton, John Aubrey, and others; it began in Michaelmas term 1659, and was held every evening at Miles's coffee houſe, in New Palace-yard: the purpoſe of it was to ſettle the form of a commonwealth, the model of which was a ſucceſſion of magiſtrates in rotation, to be elected by ballot, and continue in office for three years. At theſe meetings were debated politic l queſtions in the hearing of ſoldiers and others, whom curioſity and other worſe motives drew to it. After ſitting about ſix months, and enduring many inſults from their auditors, this factious aſſembly of political fanatics, foreſeeing the return of the ſecluded members of the houſe of Commons and the reſtoration of monarchy, broke up. Their principles may be ſeen at large in the Oceana and other writings of Harrington. Vide Athen. Oxon. Edit. 1721, vol. II. 591.

ſtored

ſtored with the irreſiſtible approbation of the people. He was therefore no longer ſecretary, and was conſequently obliged to quit the houſe which he held by his office; and proportioning his ſenſe of danger to his opinion of the importance of his writings, thought it convenient to ſeek ſome ſhelter, and hid himſelf for a time in Bartholomew-Cloſe, by Weſt Smithfield.

I cannot but remark a kind of reſpect, perhaps unconſciouſly, paid to this great man by his biographers: every houſe in which he reſided is hiſtorically mentioned, as if it were an injury to neglect naming any place that he honoured by his preſence.

The King, with lenity of which the world has had perhaps no other example, declined to be the judge or avenger of his own or his father's wrongs: and promiſed to admit into the Act of Oblivion all, except thoſe whom the parliament ſhould except; and the parliament doomed none to capital puniſhment but the wretches who had immediately co-operated in the murder of the King. Milton was certainly not one of them; he had only juſtified what they had done.

This juſtification was indeed ſufficiently offenſive; and (June 16) an order was iſſued to ſeize Milton's *Defence*, and Goodwin's *Obſtructors of Juſtice*, another book of the ſame tendency, and burn them by the common hangman. The attorney-general was ordered to proſecute the authors; but Milton was not ſeized, nor perhaps very diligently purſued.

Not long after (Auguſt 19) the flutter of innumerable boſoms was ſtilled by an act, which the King, that his mercy might want no recommendation of elegance, rather called an *act of oblivion* than of grace. Goodwin was named, with nineteen more, as incapacitated

for any publick truſt; but of Milton there was no exception.

Of this tenderneſs ſhewn to Milton, the curioſity of mankind has not forborn to enquire the reaſon. Burnet thinks he was forgotten; but this is another inſtance which may confirm Dalrymple's obſervation, who ſays, "that whenever Burnet's narrations are examined, he "appears to be miſtaken."

Forgotten he was not; for his proſecution was ordered; it muſt be therefore by deſign that he was included in the general oblivion. He is ſaid to have had friends in the houſe, ſuch as Marvel, Morrice, and Sir Thomas Clarges; and undoubtedly a man like him muſt have had influence. A very particular ſtory of his eſcape is told by Richardſon in his Memoirs, which he received from Pope, as delivered by Betterton, who might have heard it from Davenant. In the war between the King and Parliament, Davenant was made priſoner, and condemned to die; but was ſpared at the requeſt of Milton. When the turn of ſucceſs brought Milton into the like danger, Davenant repaid the benefit by appearing in his favour. Here is a reciprocation of generoſity and gratitude ſo pleaſing, that the tale makes its own way to credit. But if help were wanted, I know not where to find it. The danger of Davenant is certain from his own relation; but of his eſcape there is no account. Betterton's narration can be traced no higher; it is not known that he had it from Davenant. We are told that the benefit exchanged was life for life; but it ſeems not certain that Milton's life ever was in danger. Goodwin, who had committed the ſame kind of crime, eſcaped with incapacitation; and as excluſion from

from public truſt is a puniſhment which the power of government can commonly inflict without the help of a particular law, it required no great intereſt to exempt Milton from a cenſure little more than verbal. Something may be reaſonably aſcribed to veneration and compaſſion; to veneration of his abilities, and compaſſion for his diſtreſſes, which made it fit to forgive his malice for his learning. He was now poor and blind; and who would purſue with violence an illuſtrious enemy, depreſſed by fortune, and diſarmed by nature?

The publication of the act of oblivion put him in the ſame condition with his fellow-ſubjects. He was, however, upon ſome pretence now not known, in the cuſtody of the ſerjeant in December; and, when he was releaſed, upon his refuſal of the fees demanded, he and the ſerjeant were called before the Houſe. He was now ſafe within the ſhade of oblivion, and knew himſelf to be as much out of the power of a griping officer, as any other man. How the queſtion was determined is not known. Milton would hardly have contended, but that he knew himſelf to have right on his ſide.

He then removed to Jewin-ſtreet, near Alderſgate-ſtreet; and being blind, and by no means wealthy, wanted a domeſtick companion and attendant; and therefore, by the recommendation of Dr. Paget, married Elizabeth Minſhul, of a gentleman's family in Cheſhire, probably without a fortune. All his wives were virgins; for he has declared that he thought it groſs and indelicate to be a ſecond huſband: upon what other principles his choice was made, cannot now be known; but marriage afforded not much of

his

his happineſs. The firſt wife left him in diſguſt, and was brought back only by terror; the ſecond, indeed, ſeems to have been more a favourite, but her life was ſhort. The third, as Philips relates, oppreſſed his children in his life-time, and cheated them at his death.

Soon after his marriage, according to an obſcure ſtory, he was offered the continuance of his employment; and being preſſed by his wife to accept it, anſwered, "You, like other women, want to ride in "your coach; my wiſh is to live and die an honeſt "man." If he conſidered the Latin ſecretary as exerciſing any of the powers of government, he that had ſhared authority, either with the parliament or Cromwell, might have forborn to talk very loudly of his honeſty; and if he thought the office purely miniſterial, he certainly might have honeſtly retained it under the king. But this tale has too little evidence to deſerve a diſquiſition; large offers and ſturdy rejections are among the moſt common topicks of falſehood.

He had ſo much either of prudence or gratitude, that he forbore to diſturb the new ſettlement with any of his political or eccleſiaſtical opinions, and from this time devoted himſelf to poetry and literature. Of his zeal for learning in all its parts, he gave a proof by publiſhing, the next year (1661), *Accidence commenced Grammar*; a little book which has nothing remarkable, but that its author, who had been lately defending the ſupreme powers of his country, and was then writing *Paradiſe Loſt*, could deſcend from his elevation to reſcue children from the perplexity of grammatical confuſion, and the trouble of leſſons unneceſſarily repeated.

About

About this time Elwood the quaker, being recommended to him as one who would read Latin to him, for the advantage of his converſation, attended him every afternoon, except on Sundays *. Milton, who, in his letter to Hartlib, had declared, that *to read Latin with an Engliſh mouth is as ill a hearing as Law French*, required that Elwood ſhould learn and practiſe the Italian pronunciation, which, he ſaid, was neceſſary, if he would talk with foreigners. This ſeems to have been a taſk troubleſome without uſe. There is little reaſon for preferring the Italian pronunciation to our own, except that it is more general; and to teach it to an Engliſhman is only to make him a foreigner at home. He who travels, if he ſpeaks Latin, may ſo ſoon learn the ſounds which every native gives it, that he need make no proviſion before his journey; and if ſtrangers viſit us, it is their buſineſs to practiſe ſuch conformity to our modes as they expect from us in their own countries. Elwood complied with the directions, and improved himſelf by his attendance; for he relates, that Milton, having a curious ear, knew by his voice when he read what he did not underſtand, and would ſtop him, and *open the moſt difficult paſſages*.

* This ſingular perſon was a neighbour of Milton's father in the country, and alſo of Waller, and had the confidence of the latter, as appears by the life of that poet prefixed to ſome editions of his works. He was an ingenious man, and a ſcholar, and wrote a life of himſelf, publiſhed in 8vo, 1714. In it are related his ſudden converſion to quakeriſm, the reſentment of his father for his refuſing to be uncovered before him, his ſufferings for the truth by impriſonment, and other ſeverities, his deliverance from all his troubles, and laſtly his marriage to an amiable young woman of his own profeſſion, one of the Penn family, whom he had courted both in proſe and verſe, with all that ſimplicity of ſtyle and ſincerity of expreſſion which then diſtinguiſhed that inoffenſive people.

In a ſhort time he took a houſe in the *Artillery Walk*, leading to *Bunhill Fields*; the mention of which concludes the regiſter of Milton's removals and habitations. He lived longer in this place than in any other.

He was now buſied by *Paradiſe Loſt*. Whence he drew the original deſign has been variouſly conjectured by men who cannot bear to think themſelves ignorant of that which, at laſt, neither diligence nor ſagacity can diſcover. Some find the hint in an Italian tragedy. Voltaire tells a wild and unauthoriſed ſtory of a farce ſeen by Milton in Italy, which opened thus: *Let the Rainbow be the Fiddleſtick of the Fiddle of Heaven.* It has been already ſhewn, that the firſt conception was a tragedy or myſtery, not of a narrative, but a dramatick work, which he is ſuppoſed to have begun to reduce to its preſent form about the time (1655) when he finiſhed his diſpute with the defenders of the king.

He long had promiſed to adorn his native country by ſome great performance, while he had yet perhaps no ſettled deſign, and was ſtimulated only by ſuch expectations as naturally aroſe from the ſurvey of his attainments, and the conſciouſneſs of his powers. What he ſhould undertake, it was difficult to determine. He was *long chuſing, and began late.*

While he was obliged to divide his time between his private ſtudies and affairs of ſtate, his poetical labour muſt have been often interrupted; and perhaps he did little more in that buſy time than conſtruct the narrative, adjuſt the epiſodes, proportion the parts, accumulate images and ſentiments, and treaſure in his memory, or preſerve in writing, ſuch hints as books or meditation would ſupply. Nothing particular is known of his intellectual operations while he was a ſtateſman; for,

ving every help and accommodation at hand, he need of uncommon expedients.

g driven from all publick ſtations, he is yet too ıot to be traced by curioſity to his retirement; ıe has been found by Mr. Richardſon, the fondeſt admirers, ſitting *before his door in a grey coat of cloth, in warm ſultry weather, to enjoy the freſh ıd ſo, as well as in his own room, receiving the f people of diſtinguiſhed parts as well as quality.* ſitors of high quality muſt now be imagined to ; but men of parts might reaſonably court the ſation of a man ſo generally illuſtrious, that fo- s are reported, by Wood, to have viſited the n Bread-ſtreet where he was born.

ɔrding to another account, he was ſeen in a ſmall *neatly enough dreſſed in black cloaths, ſitting in a ıng with ruſty green; pale but not cadaverous, with nes in his hands. He ſaid, that if it were not gout, his blindneſs would be tolerable.*

ıe intervals of his pain, being made unable to common exerciſes, he uſed to ſwing in a chair, netimes played upon an organ *.

was now confeſſedly and viſibly employed upon em, of which the progreſs might be noted by vith whom he was familiar; for he was obliged, ıe had compoſed as many lines as his memory conveniently retain, to employ ſome friend in ; them, having, at leaſt for part of the time, no

ton's father, as has been mentioned in a preceding note, ſkilled in muſic; and we are told by Aubrey, that he taught ſon, who, as Wood adds, beſides that he could play on the ıas able to bear a part in vocal and inſtrumental muſic, an ſhment which, in his time, it was deemed diſgraceful for rell educated to want.

regular

regular attendant. This gave opportunity to obſervations and reports.

Mr. Philips obſerves, that there was a very remarkable circumſtance in the compoſure of *Paradiſe Loſt*, "which I have a particular reaſon," ſays he, "to remember; for whereas I had the peruſal of it from "the very beginning, for ſome years, as I went "from time to time to viſit him, in parcels of ten, "twenty, or thirty verſes at a time (which, being "written by whatever hand came next, might poſſibly "want correction as to the orthography and pointing), "having, as the ſummer came on, not been ſhewed "any for a conſiderable while, and deſiring the reaſon "thereof, was anſwered, that his vein never happily "flowed but from the Autumnal Equinox to the Vernal; and that whatever he attempted at other times "was never to his ſatisfaction, though he courted his "fancy never ſo much; ſo that, in all the years he "was about this poem, he may be ſaid to have ſpent "half his time therein."

Upon this relation Toland remarks, that in his opinion Philips has miſtaken the time of the year; for Milton, in his Elegies, declares that with the advance of the Spring he feels the increaſe of his poetical force, *redeunt in carmina vires*. To this it is anſwered, that Philips could hardly miſtake time ſo well marked; and it may be added, that Milton might find different times of the year favourable to different parts of life. Mr. Richardſon conceives it impoſſible that *ſuch a work ſhould be ſuſpended for ſix months, or for one. It may go on faſter or ſlower, but it muſt go on.* By what neceſſity it muſt continually go on, or why it might not be laid aſide and reſumed, it is not eaſy to diſcover.

This

This dependance of the ſoul upon the ſeaſons, thoſe temporary and periodical ebbs and flows of intellect, may, I ſuppoſe, juſtly be derided as the fumes of vain imagination. *Sapiens dominabitur aſtris.* The author that thinks himſelf weather-bound will find, with a little help from hellebore, that he is only idle or exhauſted. But while this notion has poſſeſſion of the head, it produces the inability which it ſuppoſes. Our powers owe much of their energy to our hopes; *poſſunt quia poſſe videntur.* When ſucceſs ſeems attainable, diligence is enforced; but when it is admitted that the faculties are ſuppreſſed by a croſs wind, or a cloudy ſky, the day is given up without reſiſtance; for who can contend with the courſe of Nature?

From ſuch prepoſſeſſions Milton ſeems not to have been free. There prevailed in his time an opinion that the world was in its decay, and that we have had the misfortune to be produced in the decrepitude of Nature. It was ſuſpected that the whole creation languiſhed, that neither trees nor animals had the height or bulk of their predeceſſors, and that every thing was daily ſinking by gradual diminution *. Milton appears to ſuſpect that ſouls partake of the general degeneracy, and is not without ſome fear that his book is to be written in *an age too late* for heroick poeſy.

* This opinion is, with great learning and ingenuity, refuted in a book now very little known, "An Apology or Declaration of the "Power and Providence of God in the Government of the World," by Dr. George Hakewill, Lond. folio, 1635. The firſt who ventured to propagate it in this country was Dr. Gabriel Goodman, biſhop of Glouceſter, a man of a verſatile temper, and the author of a book entitled, "The Fall of Man, or the Corruption of Nature "proved by natural reaſon." Lond. 1616 and 1624, quarto. He was plundered in the Uſurpation, turned Roman Catholic, and died in obſcurity. Vide Athen. Oxon. vol. I. 727.

Another

Another opinion wanders about the world, and ſometimes finds reception among wiſe men; an opinion that reſtrains the operations of the mind to particular regions, and ſuppoſes that a luckleſs mortal may be born in a degree of latitude too high or too low for wiſdom or for wit. From this fancy, wild as it is, he had not wholly cleared his head, when he feared leſt the *climate* of his country might be *too cold* for flights of imagination.

Into a mind already occupied by ſuch fancies, another not more reaſonable might eaſily find its way. He that could fear leſt his genius had fallen upon too old a world, or too chill a climate, might conſiſtently magnify to himſelf the influence of the ſeaſons, and believe his faculties to be vigorous only half the year.

His ſubmiſſion to the ſeaſons was at leaſt more reaſonable than his dread of decaying Nature, or a frigid zone; for general cauſes muſt operate uniformly in a general abatement of mental power; if leſs could be performed by the writer, leſs likewiſe would content the judges of his work. Among this lagging race of froſty grovellers he might ſtill have riſen into eminence by producing ſomething which *they ſhould not willingly let die.* However inferior to the heroes who were born in better ages, he might ſtill be great among his contemporaries, with the hope of growing every day greater in the dwindle of poſterity. He might ſtill be a giant among the pygmies, the one-eyed monarch of the blind.

Of his artifices of ſtudy, or particular hours of compoſition, we have little account, and there was perhaps little to be told. Richardſon, who ſeems to have been very diligent in his enquiries, but diſcovers always

ways a wiſh to find Milton diſcriminated from other men, relates, that "he would ſometimes lie awake "whole nights, but not a verſe could he make; and "on a ſudden his poetical faculty would ruſh upon "him with an *impetus* or *æſtrum*, and his daughter "was immediately called to ſecure what came. At "other times he would dictate perhaps forty lines "in a breath, and then reduce them to half the "number."

Theſe burſts of light, and involutions of darkneſs; theſe tranſient and involuntary excurſions and retroceſſions of invention, having ſome appearance of deviation from the common train of Nature, are eagerly caught by the lovers of a wonder. Yet ſomething of this inequality happens to every man in every mode of exertion, manual or mental. The mechanick cannot handle his hammer and his file at all times with equal dexterity; there are hours, he knows not why, when *his hand is out*. By Mr. Richardſon's relation, caſually conveyed, much regard cannot be claimed. That, in his intellectual hour, Milton called for his daughter *to ſecure what came*, may be queſtioned; for unluckily it happens to be known that his daughters were never taught to write; nor would he have been obliged, as is univerſally confeſſed, to have employed any caſual viſiter in diſburthening his memory, if his daughter could have performed the office.

The ſtory of reducing his exuberance has been told of other authors, and, though doubtleſs true of every fertile and copious mind, ſeems to have been gratuitouſly transferred to Milton.

What he has told us, and we cannot now know more, is, that he compoſed much of his poem in the night

and morning, I ſuppoſe before his mind was diſturbed with common buſineſs; and that he poured out with great fluency his *unpremeditated verſe.* Verſification, free, like his, from the diſtreſſes of rhyme, muſt, by a work ſo long, be made prompt and habitual; and, when his thoughts were once adjuſted, the words would come at his command.

At what particular times of his life the parts of his work were written, cannot often be known. The beginning of the third book ſhews that he had loſt his ſight; and the Introduction to the ſeventh, that the return of the King had clouded him with diſcountenance; and that he was offended by the licentious feſtivity of the Reſtoration. There are no other internal notes of time. Milton, being now cleared from all effects of his diſloyalty, had nothing required from him but the common duty of living in quiet, to be rewarded with the common right of protection; but this, which, when he ſculked from the approach of his King was perhaps more than he hoped, ſeems not to have ſatisfied him; for no ſooner is he ſafe, than he finds himſelf in danger, *fallen on evil days and evil tongues, and with darkneſs and with danger compaſs'd round.* This darkneſs, had his eyes been better employed, had undoubtedly deſerved compaſſion: but to add the mention of danger was ungrateful and unjuſt. He was fallen indeed on *evil days*; the time was come in which regicides could no longer boaſt their wickedneſs. But of *evil tongues* for Milton to complain, required impudence at leaſt equal to his other powers; Milton, whoſe warmeſt advocates muſt allow, that he never ſpared any aſperity of reproach or brutality of inſolence.

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But the charge itſelf ſeems to be falſe; for it would be hard to recollect any reproach caſt upon him, either ſerious or ludicrous, through the whole remaining part of his life. He purſued his ſtudies or his amuſements, without perſecution, moleſtation, or inſult. Such is the reverence paid to great abilities, however miſuſed: they who contemplated in Milton the ſcholar and the wit, were contented to forget the reviler of his King.

When the plague (1665) raged in London, Milton took refuge at Chalfont in Bucks; where Elwood, who had taken the houſe for him, firſt ſaw a complete copy of *Paradiſe Loſt*, and, having peruſed it, ſaid to him, "Thou haſt ſaid a great deal upon *Paradiſe Loſt*; what "haſt thou to ſay upon *Paradiſe found?*"

Next year, when the danger of infection had ceaſed, he returned to Bunhill-fields, and deſigned the publication of his poem. A licenſe was neceſſary, and he could expect no great kindneſs from a chaplain of the archbiſhop of Canterbury. He ſeems, however, to have been treated with tenderneſs; for though objections were made to particular paſſages, and among them to the ſimile of the ſun eclipſed in the firſt book, yet the licenſe was granted; and he ſold his copy, April 27, 1667, to Samuel Simmons, for an immediate payment of five pounds, with a ſtipulation to receive five pounds more when thirteen hundred ſhould be ſold of the firſt edition: and again, five pounds after the ſale of the ſame number of the ſecond edition: and another five pounds after the ſame ſale of the third. None of the three editions were to be extended beyond fifteen hundred copies.

The firſt edition was ten books, in a ſmall quarto. The titles were varied from year to year; and an advertiſement and the arguments of the books were omitted in ſome copies, and inſerted in others.

The ſale gave him in two years a right to his ſecond payment, for which the receipt was ſigned April 26, 1669. The ſecond edition was not given till 1674; it was printed in ſmall octavo; and the number of books was increaſed to twelve, by a diviſion of the ſeventh and twelfth; and ſome other ſmall improvements were made. The third edition was publiſhed in 1678; and the widow, to whom the copy was then to devolve, ſold all her claims to Simmons for eight pounds, according to her receipt given Dec. 21, 1680. Simmons had already agreed to transfer the whole right to Brabazon Aylmer for twenty-five pounds; and Aylmer ſold to Jacob Tonſon half, Auguſt 17, 1683, half, March 24, 1690, at a price conſiderably enlarged. In the hiſtory of *Paradiſe Loſt* a deduction thus minute will rather gratify than fatigue.

The ſlow ſale and tardy reputation of this poem have been always mentioned as evidences of neglected merit, and of the uncertainty of literary fame; and enquiries have been made, and conjectures offered, about the cauſes of its long obſcurity and late reception. But has the caſe been truly ſtated? Have not lamentation and wonder been laviſhed on an evil that was never felt?

That in the reigns of Charles and James the *Paradiſe L* received no publick acclamations is readily con- . Wit and literature were on the ſide of the C : and who that ſolicited favour or faſhion would to praiſe the defender of the regicides? All that

that he himſelf could think his due, from *evil tongues* in *evil days*, was that reverential ſilence which was generouſly preſerved. But it cannot be inferred that his poem was not read, or not, however unwillingly, admired.

The ſale, if it be conſidered, will juſtify the publick. Thoſe who have no power to judge of paſt times but by their own, ſhould always doubt their concluſions. The call for books was not in Milton's age what it is in the preſent. To read was not then a general amuſement; neither traders, nor often gentlemen, thought themſelves diſgraced by ignorance. The women had not then aſpired to literature, nor was every houſe ſupplied with a cloſet of knowledge. Thoſe, indeed, who profeſſed learning, were not leſs learned than at any other time; but of that middle race of ſtudents who read for pleaſure or accompliſhment, and who buy the numerous products of modern typography, the number was then comparatively ſmall. To prove the paucity of readers, it may be ſufficient to remark, that the nation had been ſatisfied from 1623 to 1664, that is, forty-one years, with only two editions of the works of Shakſpeare, which probably did not together make one thouſand copies.

The ſale of thirteen hundred copies in two years, in oppoſition to ſo much recent enmity, and to a ſtyle of verſification new to all and diſguſting to many, was an uncommon example of the prevalence of genius. The demand did not immediately increaſe; for many more readers than were ſupplied at firſt the nation did not afford. Only three thouſand were ſold in eleven years; for it forced its way without aſſiſtance: its admirers did not dare to publiſh their opinion; and the oppor-

tunities now given of attracting notice by advertiſements were then very few; the means of proclaiming the publication of new books have been produced by that general literature which now pervades the nation through all its ranks.

But the reputation and price of the copy ſtill advanced, till the Revolution put an end to the ſecrecy of love, and *Paradiſe Loſt* broke into open view with ſufficient ſecurity of kind reception.

Fancy can hardly forbear to conjecture with what temper Milton ſurveyed the ſilent progreſs of his work, and marked its reputation ſtealing its way in a kind of ſubterraneous current through fear and ſilence. I cannot but conceive him calm and confident, little diſappointed, not at all dejected, relying on his own merit with ſteady conſciouſneſs, and waiting, without impatience, the viciſſitudes of opinion, and the impartiality of a future generation.

In the mean time he continued his ſtudies, and ſupplied the want of ſight by a very odd expedient, of which Philips gives the following account:

Mr. Philips tells us, "that though our author had "daily about him one or other to read, ſome perſons "of man's eſtate, who, of their own accord, greedily "catched at the opportunity of being his readers, that "they might as well reap the benefit of what they read "to him, as oblige him by the benefit of their read-"ing; and others of younger years were ſent by their "parents to the ſame end: yet excuſing only the "eldeſt daughter, by reaſon of her bodily infirmity, "and difficult utterance of ſpeech, (which, to ſay "truth, I doubt was the principal cauſe of excuſing "her), the other two were condemned to the per-

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"formance of reading, and exactly pronouncing of all "the languages of whatever book he ſhould, at one "time or other, think fit to peruſe, viz. the Hebrew "(and I think the Syriac), the Greek, the Latin, the "Italian, Spaniſh, and French. All which ſorts of "books to be confined to read, without underſtanding "one word, muſt needs be a trial of patience almoſt "beyond endurance. Yet it was endured by both for "a long time, though the irkſomeneſs of this em-"ployment could not be always concealed, but broke "out more and more into expreſſions of uneaſineſs; "ſo that at length they were all, even the eldeſt alſo, "ſent out to learn ſome curious and ingenious ſorts of "manufacture, that are proper for women to learn; "particularly embroideries in gold or ſilver."

In this ſcene of miſery which this mode of intellectual labour ſets before our eyes, it is hard to determine whether the daughters or the father are moſt to be lamented. A language not underſtood can never be ſo read as to give pleaſure, and very ſeldom ſo as to convey meaning. If few men would have had reſolution to write books with ſuch embarraſſments, few likewiſe would have wanted ability to find ſome better expedient.

Three years after his *Paradiſe Loſt* (1667), he publiſhed his *Hiſtory of England*, compriſing the whole fable of Geoffry of Monmouth, and continued to the Norman invaſion. Why he ſhould have given the firſt part, which he ſeems not to believe, and which is univerſally rejected, it is difficult to conjecture. The ſtyle is harſh; but it has ſomething of rough vigour, which perhaps may often ſtrike, though it cannot pleaſe.

On this hiſtory the licenſer again fixed his claws, and before he could tranſmit it to the preſs tore out ſeveral parts. Some cenſures of the Saxon monks were taken away, leſt they ſhould be applied to the modern clergy; and a character of the Long Parliament, and Aſſembly of Divines, was excluded; of which the author gave a copy to the earl of Angleſea, and which, being afterwards publiſhed, has been ſince inſerted in its proper place.

The ſame year were printed *Paradiſe Regained*, and *Sampſon Agoniſtes*, a tragedy written in imitation of the Ancients, and never deſigned by the author for the ſtage. As theſe poems were publiſhed by another bookſeller, it has been aſked, whether Simmons was diſcouraged from receiving them by the ſlow ſale of the former. Why a writer changed his bookſeller a hundred years ago, I am far from hoping to diſcover. Certainly, he who in two years ſells thirteen hundred copies of a volume in quarto, bought for two payments of five pounds each, has no reaſon to repent his purchaſe.

When Milton ſhewed *Paradiſe Regained* to Elwood, "This," ſaid he, "is owing to you; for you put it "in my head by the queſtion you put to me at Chal-"font, which otherwiſe I had not thought of."

His laſt poetical offspring was his favourite. He could not, as Elwood relates, endure to hear *Paradiſe Loſt* preferred to *Paradiſe Regained*. Many cauſes may vitiate a writer's judgement of his own works. On that which has coſt him much labour he ſets a high value, becauſe he is unwilling to think that he has been diligent in vain; what has been produced without toilſome efforts is conſidered with delight, as a proof

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of vigorous faculties and fertile invention; and the laſt work, whatever it be, has neceſſarily moſt of the grace of novelty. Milton, however it happened, had this prejudice, and had it to himſelf.

To that muliplicity of attainments, and extent of comprehenſion, that entitle this great author to our veneration, may be added a kind of humble dignity, which did not diſdain the meaneſt ſervices to literature. The epic poet, the controvertiſt, the politician, having already deſcended to accommodate children with a book of rudiments, now, in the laſt years of his life, compoſed a book of Logick, for the initiation of ſtudents in philoſophy; and publiſhed (1672) *Artis Logicæ plenior Inſtitutio ad Petri Rami methodum concinnata*; that is, "A new Scheme of Logick, according to the "Method of Ramus." I know not whether, even in this book, he did not intend an act of hoſtility againſt the Univerſities; for Ramus was one of the firſt oppugners of the old philoſophy, who diſturbed with innovations the quiet of the ſchools.

His polemical diſpoſition again revived. He had now been ſafe ſo long, that he forgot his fears, and publiſhed a *Treatiſe of true Religion, Hereſy, Schiſm, Toleration, and the beſt Means to prevent the Growth of Popery.*

But this little tract is modeſtly written, with reſpectful mention of the Church of England, and an appeal to the thirty-nine articles. His principle of toleration is, agreement in the ſufficiency of the Scriptures; and he extends it to all who, whatever their opinions are, profeſs to derive them from the ſacred books. The papiſts appeal to other teſtimonies, and are therefore in his opinion not to be permitted the liberty of either publick

or private worſhip; for though they plead conſcience, *we have no warrant*, he ſays, *to regard conſcience, which is not grounded in Scripture.*

Thoſe who are not convinced by his reaſons, may be perhaps delighted with his wit. The term *Roman catholick* is, he ſays, *one of the Pope's bulls; it is particular univerſal*, or *catholick ſchiſmatick.*

He has, however, ſomething better. As the beſt preſervative againſt Popery, he recommends the diligent peruſal of the Scriptures; a duty, from which he warns the buſy part of mankind not to think themſelves excuſed.

He now reprinted his juvenile poems, with ſome additions.

In the laſt year of his life he ſent to the preſs, ſeeming to take delight in publication, a collection of Familiar Epiſtles in Latin; to which, being too few to make a volume, he added ſome academical exerciſes, which perhaps he peruſed with pleaſure, as they recalled to his memory the days of youth; but for which nothing but veneration for his name could now procure a reader.

When he had attained his ſixty-ſixth year, the gout, with which he had been long tormented, prevailed over the enfeebled powers of nature. He died by a quiet and ſilent expiration, about the tenth of November 1674, at his houſe in Bunhill-fields; and was buried next his father in the chancel of St. Giles at Cripplegate. His funeral was very ſplendidly and numerouſly attended.

Upon his grave there is ſuppoſed to have been no memorial; but in our time a monument has been erected in Weſtminſter-Abbey *To the Author of Paradiſe Loſt*, by Mr.

Mr. Benſon, who has in the inſcription beſtowed more words upon himſelf than upon Milton.

When the inſcription for the monument of Philips, in which he was ſaid to be *ſoli Miltono ſecundus*, was exhibited to Dr. Sprat, then dean of Weſtminſter, he refuſed to admit it; the name of Milton was, in his opinion, too deteſtable to be read on the wall of a building dedicated to devotion. Atterbury, who ſucceeded him, being author of the inſcription, permitted its reception. "And ſuch has been the change of pub-"lick opinion," ſaid Dr. Gregory, from whom I heard this account, "that I have ſeen erected in the church a "ſtatue of that man, whoſe name I once knew conſi-"dered as a pollution of its walls."

Milton has the reputation of having been in his youth eminently beautiful, ſo as to have been called the Lady of his college. His hair, which was of a light brown, parted at the foretop, and hung down upon his ſhoulders, according to the picture which he has given of Adam. He was, however, not of the heroick ſtature, but rather below the middle ſize, according to Mr. Richardſon, who mentions him as having narrowly eſcaped from being *ſhort and thick* *. He was vigorous and active, and delighted in the exerciſe of the ſword, in which he is related to have been eminently ſkilful. His weapon was, I believe, not the rapier, but the back-ſword, of which he recommends the uſe in his book on Education.

* Richardſon's deſcription of Milton's perſon is here alluded to; "He was, no he was not," ſays this quaint writer, "a ſhort thick "man; but, had he been ſomewhat ſhorter and thicker, he had been "a ſhort thick man." Of Horace it is ſaid that he was brevis et obeſus.

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His eyes are ſaid never to have been bright; but, if he was a dexterous fencer, they muſt have been once quick.

His domeſtick habits, ſo far as they are known, were thoſe of a ſevere ſtudent. He drank little ſtrong drink of any kind, and fed without exceſs in quantity, and in his earlier years without delicacy of choice. In his youth he ſtudied late at night; but afterwards changed his hours, and reſted in bed from nine to four in the ſummer, and five in winter. The courſe of his day was beſt known after he was blind. When he firſt roſe, he heard a chapter in the Hebrew Bible, and then ſtudied till twelve; then took ſome exerciſe for an hour; then dined, then played on the organ, and ſung, or heard another ſing; then ſtudied to ſix; then entertained his viſiters till eight; then ſupped, and, after a pipe of tobacco and a glaſs of water, went to bed.

So is his life deſcribed; but this even tenour appears attainable only in Colleges. He that lives in the world will ſometimes have the ſucceſſion of his practice broken and confuſed. Viſiters, of whom Milton is repreſented to have had great numbers, will come and ſtay unſeaſonably; buſineſs, of which every man has ſome, muſt be done when others will do it.

When he did not care to riſe early, he had ſomething read to him by his bedſide; perhaps at this time his daughters were employed. He compoſed much in the morning, and dictated in the day, ſitting obliquely in an elbow-chair, with his leg thrown over the arm.

Fortune appears not to have had much of his care. In the civil wars he lent his perſonal eſtate to the parliament; but when, after the conteſt was decided, he ſolicited

cited repayment, he met not only with neglect, but *p rebuke*; and, having tired both himſelf and his nds, was given up to poverty and hopeleſs indigna-, till he ſhewed how able he was to do greater ſer-. He was then made Latin ſecretary, with two ndred pounds a year; and had a thouſand pounds for *Defence of the People.* His widow, who, after his th, retired to Naimptwich in Cheſhire, and died ut 1729, is ſaid to have reported that he loſt two uſand pounds by entruſting it to a ſcrivener; and t, in the general depredation upon the Church, he graſped an eſtate of about ſixty pounds a year be-ging to Weſtminſter-Abbey, which, like other ſharers he plunder of rebellion, he was afterwards obliged eturn. Two thouſand pounds, which he had placed the Exciſe-office, were alſo loſt. There is yet no ſon to believe that he was ever reduced to indigence. wants, being few, were competently ſupplied. ſold his library before his death, and left his fa-y fifteen hundred pounds, on which his widow hold, and only gave one hundred to each of his ghters.

His literature was unqueſtionably great. He read the languages which are conſidered either as learned polite; Hebrew, with its two dialects, Greek, Latin, ian, French, and Spaniſh. In Latin his ſkill was h as places him in the firſt rank of writers and cri-s; and he appears to have cultivated Italian with ommon diligence. The books in which his ghter, who uſed to read to him, repreſented him as ſt delighting, after Homer, which he could almoſt at, were Ovid's Metamorphoſes and Euripides. Euripides is, by Mr. Cradock's kindneſs, now in

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my hands: the margin is ſometimes noted; but I have found nothing remarkable.

Of the Engliſh poets he ſet moſt value upon Spenſer, Shakſpeare, and Cowley. Spenſer was apparently his favourite: Shakſpeare he may eaſily be ſuppoſed to like, with every ſkillful reader; but I ſhould not have expected that Cowley, whoſe ideas of excellence were different from his own, would have had much of his approbation. His character of Dryden, who ſometimes viſited him, was, that he was a good rhymiſt, but no poet.

His theological opinions are ſaid to have been firſt Calviniſtical; and afterwards, perhaps when he began to hate the Preſbyterians, to have tended towards Arminianiſm. In the mixed queſtions of theology and government, he never thinks that he can recede far enough from popery, or prelacy; but what Baudius ſays of Eraſmus ſeems applicable to him, *magis habuit quod fugeret, quam quod ſequeretur.* He had determined rather what to condemn, than what to approve. He has not aſſociated himſelf with any denomination of Proteſtants: we know rather what he was not, than what he was. He was not of the church of Rome; he was not of the church of England *.

To be of no church is dangerous. Religion, of which the rewards are diſtant, and which is animated only by Faith and Hope, will glide by degrees out of the mind, unleſs it be invigorated and reimpreſſed by external ordinances, by ſtated calls to worſhip, and the ſalutary influence of example. Milton, who appears to have had full conviction of the truth of Chriſtianity, and to have regarded the Holy Scriptures with the

* Peck is ſo fanciful as to ſuggeſt that he was a Quaker.

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profoundeſt veneration, to have been untainted by an heretical peculiarity of opinion, and to have lived in a confirmed belief of the immediate and occaſional agency of Providence, yet grew old without any viſible worſhip. In the diſtribution of his hours, there was no hour of prayer, either ſolitary, or with his houſehold; omitting publick prayers, he omitted all.

Of this omiſſion the reaſon has been ſought, upon a ſuppoſition which ought never to be made, that men live with their own approbation, and juſtify their conduct to themſelves. Prayer certainly was not thought ſuperfluous by him, who repreſents our firſt parents as praying acceptably in the ſtate of innocence, and efficaciouſly after their fall. That he lived without prayer can hardly be affirmed; his ſtudies and meditations were an habitual prayer. The neglect of it in his family was probably a fault for which he condemned himſelf, and which he intended to correct, but that death, as too often happens, intercepted his reformation.

His political notions were thoſe of an acrimonious and ſurly republican, for which it is not known that he gave any better reaſon than that *a popular government was the moſt frugal; for the trappings of a monarchy would ſet up an ordinary commonwealth.* It is ſurely very ſhallow policy, that ſuppoſes money to be the chief good; and even this, without conſidering that the ſupport and expence of a Court is, for the moſt part, only a particular kind of traffick, by which money is circulated, without any national impoveriſhment.

Milton's republicaniſm was, I am afraid, founded in an envious hatred of greatneſs, and a ſullen deſire of independence; in petulance impatient of controul, and

pride

pride diſdainful of ſuperiority. He hated r[illegible]archs in the ſtate, and prelates in the church; for he hated all whom he was required to obey. It is to be ſuſpected, that his predominant deſire was to deſtroy rather than eſtabliſh, and that he felt not ſo much the love of liberty as repugnance to authority.

It has been obſerved, that they who moſt loudly clamour for liberty do not moſt liberally grant it. What we know of Milton's character, in domeſtick relations, is, that he was ſevere and arbitrary. His family conſiſted of women; and there appears in his books ſomething like a Turkiſh contempt of females, as ſubordinate and inferior beings. That his own daughters might not break the ranks, he ſuffered them to be depreſſed by a mean and penurious education. He thought woman made only for obedience, and man only for rebellion.

Of his family ſome account may be expected. His ſiſter, firſt married to Mr. Philips, afterwards married Mr. Agar, a friend of her firſt huſband, who ſucceeded him in the Crown-office. She had by her firſt huſband Edward and John, the two nephews whom Milton educated; and by her ſecond, two daughters.

His brother, Sir Chriſtopher, had two daughters, Mary and Catherine *; and a ſon Thomas, who ſucceeded Agar in the Crown-office, and left a daughter living in 1749 in Groſvenor-ſtreet.

* Both theſe perſons were living at Holloway, about the year 1734, and at that time poſſeſſed ſuch a degree of health and ſtrength, as enabled them on Sundays and Prayer-days to walk [illegible]ne up a ſteep hill to Highgate chapel. One of them was Ninety-two, at the time of her death. Their parentage was known to few, and their names were corrupted into Melton. By the Crown-office mentioned in the two laſt paragraphs, we are to underſtand the Crown-office of the Court of Chancery.

Milton

Milton had children only by his firſt wife; Anne, Mary, and Deborah. Anne, though deformed, married a maſter-builder, and died of her firſt child. Mary died ſingle. Deborah married Abraham Clark, a weaver in Spital-fields, and lived ſeventy-ſix years, to Auguſt 1727. This is the daughter of whom publick mention has been made. She could repeat the firſt lines of Homer, the Metamorphoſes, and ſome of Euripides, by having often read them. Yet here incredulity is ready to make a ſtand. Many repetitions are neceſſary to fix in the memory lines not underſtood; and why ſhould Milton wiſh or want to hear them ſo often! Theſe lines were at the beginning of the poems. Of a book written in a language not underſtood, the beginning raiſes no more attention than the end; and as thoſe that underſtand it know commonly the beginning beſt, its rehearſal will ſeldom be neceſſary. It is not likely that Milton required any paſſage to be ſo much repeated as that his daughter could learn it; nor likely that he deſired the initial lines to be read at all: nor that the daughter, weary of the drudgery of pronouncing unideal ſounds, would voluntarily commit them to memory.

To this gentlewoman Addiſon made a preſent, and promiſed ſome eſtabliſhment; but died ſoon after. Queen Caroline ſent her fifty guineas. She had ſeven ſons and three daughters; but none of them had any children, except her ſon Caleb and her daughter Elizabeth. Caleb went to Fort St. George in the Eaſt Indies, and had two ſons, of whom nothing is now known. Elizabeth married Thomas Foſter, a weaver in Spital-fields; and had ſeven children, who all died. She kept a petty grocer's or chandler's ſhop, firſt at Holloway,

and afterwards in Cock-lane near Shoreditch Church. She knew little of her grandfather, and that little was not good. She told of his harſhneſs to his daughters, and his refuſal to have them taught to write; and, in oppoſition to other accounts, repreſented him as delicate, though temperate, in his diet.

In 1750, April 5, *Comus* was played for her benefit. She had ſo little acquaintance with diverſion or gaiety, that ſhe did not know what was intended when a benefit was offered her. The profits of the night were only one hundred and thirty pounds, though Dr. Newton brought a large contribution; and twenty pounds were given by Tonſon, a man who is to be praiſed as often as he is named. Of this ſum one hundred pounds was placed in the ſtocks, after ſome debate between her and her huſband in whoſe name it ſhould be entered; and the reſt augmented their little ſtock, with which they removed to Iſlington. This was the greateſt benefaction that *Paradiſe Loſt* ever procured the author's deſcendents; and to this he, who has now attempted to relate his Life, had the honour of contributing a Prologue.

IN the examination of Milton's poetical works, I ſhall pay ſo much regard to time as to begin with his juvenile productions. For his early pieces he ſeems to have had a degree of fondneſs not very laudable: what he has once written he reſolves to preſerve, and gives to the publick an unfiniſhed poem, which he broke off becauſe he was *nothing ſatisfied with what he had done*, ſuppoſing his readers leſs nice than himſelf. Theſe preludes to his future labours are in Italian, Latin, and Engliſh. Of the Italian I cannot pretend to ſpeak as a critick;

but I have heard them commended by a man
alified to decide their merit. The Latin pieces
iouſly elegant; but the delightwhich they afford
by the exquiſite imitation of the ancient writers,
ɔurity of the diction, and the harmony of the
ſ, than by any power of invention, or vigour of
ıt. They are not all of equal value; the elegies
ıe odes; and ſome of the exerciſes on Gunpow-
aſon might have been ſpared.

Engliſh poems, though they make no promiſes
diſe Loſt, have this evidence of genius, that they
caſt original and unborrowed. But their pecu-
ſ not excellence: if they differ from verſes of
they differ for the worſe; for they are too often
iſhed by repulſive harſhneſs; the combinations
s are new, but they are not pleaſing; the rhymes
hets ſeem to be laboriouſly ſought, and violently

in the early parts of his life he wrote with much
pears from his manuſcripts, happily preſerved
ɔridge, in which many of his ſmaller works are
ſ they were firſt written, with the ſubſequent
ɔns. Such reliques ſhew how excellence is ac-
what we hope ever to do with eaſe, we may learn
lo with diligence.

ɛ who admire the beauties of this great poet,
ıes force their own judgement into falſe appro-
f his little pieces, and prevail upon themſelves
ɛ that admirable which is only ſingular. All
rt compoſitions can commonly attain is neatneſs
ance. Milton never learned the art of doing
ngs with grace; he overlooked the milder ex-

cellence of ſuavity and ſoftneſs; he was a *Lion* that had no ſkill *in dandling the Kid.*

One of the poems on which much praiſe has been beſtowed is *Lycidas*; of which the diction is harſh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers unpleaſing. What beauty there is, we muſt therefore ſeek in the ſentiments and images. It is not to be conſidered as the effuſion of real paſſion; for paſſion runs not after remote alluſions and obſcure opinions. Paſſion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls upon Arethuſe and Mincius, nor tells of rough *ſatyrs* and *fauns with cloven heel.* Where there is leiſure for fiction there is little grief.

In this poem there is no nature, for there is no truth; there is no art, for there is nothing new. Its form is that of a paſtoral, eaſy, vulgar, and therefore diſguſting; whatever images it can ſupply, are long ago exhauſted; and its inherent improbability always forces diſſatisfaction on the mind. When Cowley tells of Hervey that they ſtudied together, it is eaſy to ſuppoſe how much he muſt miſs the companion of his labours, and the partner of his diſcoveries; but what image of tenderneſs can be excited by theſe lines!

> We drove a field, and both together heard
> What time the grey fly winds her ſultry horn,
> Battening our flocks with the freſh dews of night.

We know that they never drove a field, and that they had no flocks no batten; and though it be allowed that the repreſentation may be allegorical, the true meaning is ſo uncertain and remote, that it is never ſought becauſe it cannot be known when it is found.

Among the flocks, and copſes, and flowers, appear the heathen deities; Jove and Phœbus, Neptune and Æolus,

Æolus, with a long train of mythological imagery, ſuch as a College eaſily ſupplies. Nothing can leſs diſplay knowledge, or leſs exerciſe invention, than to tell how a ſhepherd has loſt his companion, and muſt now feed his flocks alone, without any judge of his ſkill in piping; and how one god aſks another god what is become of Lycidas, and how neither god can tell. He who thus grieves will excite no ſympathy; he who thus praiſes will confer no honour.

This poem has yet a groſſer fault. With theſe trifling fictions are mingled the moſt awful and ſacred truths, ſuch as ought never to be polluted with ſuch irreverend combinations. The ſhepherd likewiſe is now a feeder of ſheep, and afterwards an eccleſiaſtical paſtor, a ſuperintendant of a Chriſtian flock. Such equivocations are always unſkilful; but here they are indecent, and at leaſt approach to impiety, of which, however, I believe the writer not to have been conſcious.

Such is the power of reputation juſtly acquired, that its blaze drives away the eye from nice examination. Surely no man could have fancied that he read *Lycidas* with pleaſure, had he not known its author.

Of the two pieces, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penſeroſo*, I believe, opinion is uniform; every man that reads them, reads them with pleaſure. The author's deſign is not, what Theobald has remarked, merely to ſhew how objects derive their colours from the mind, by repreſenting the operation of the ſame things upon the gay and the melancholy temper, or upon the ſame man as he is differently diſpoſed; but rather how, among the ſucceſſive variety of appearances, every diſpoſition of mind takes hold on thoſe by which it may be gratified.

The *chearful* man hears the lark in the morning; the *penſive* man hears the nightingale in the evening. The *chearful* man ſees the cock ſtrut, and hears the horn and hounds echo in the wood; then walks *not unſeen* to obſerve the glory of the riſing ſun, or liſten to the ſinging milk-maid, and view the labours of the plowman and the mower; then caſts his eyes about him over ſcenes of ſmiling plenty, and looks up to the diſtant tower, the reſidence of ſome fair inhabitant; thus he purſues rural gaiety through a day of labour or of play, and delights himſelf at night with the fanciful narratives of ſuperſtitious ignorance.

The *penſive* man, at one time, walks *unſeen* to muſe at midnight; and at another hears the ſullen curfew. If the weather drives him home, he ſits in a room lighted only by *glowing embers*; or by a lonely lamp outwatches the North Star, to diſcover the habitation of ſeparate ſouls, and varies the ſhades of meditation by contemplating the magnificent or pathetic ſcenes of tragick and epick poetry. When the morning comes, a morning gloomy with rain and wind, he walks into the dark trackleſs woods, falls aſleep by ſome murmuring water, and with melancholy enthuſiaſm expects ſome dream of prognoſtication, or ſome muſic played by aerial performers.

Both Mirth and Melancholy are ſolitary, ſilent inhabitants of the breaſt, that neither receive nor tranſmit communication; no mention is therefore made of the philoſophical friend, or a pleaſant companion. The ſerieuſneſs does not ariſe from any participation of calamity, nor the gaiety from the pleaſures of the table.

The man of *chearfulneſs*, having exhauſted the country, tries what *towered cities* will afford, and mingles

gles with ſcenes of ſplendor, gay aſſemblies, and nuptial feſtivities; but he mingles a mere ſpectator, as, when the learned comedies of Jonſon, or the wild dramas of Shakſpeare, are exhibited, he attends the theatre.

The *penſive* man never loſes himſelf in crowds, but walks the cloiſter, or frequents the cathedral. Milton probably had not yet forſaken the Church.

Both his characters delight in muſick; but he ſeems to think that chearful notes would have obtained from Pluto a compleat diſmiſſion of Eurydice, of whom ſolemn ſounds only procured a conditional releaſe.

For the old age of Chearfulneſs he makes no proviſion; but Melancholy he conducts with great dignity to the cloſe of life. His Chearfulneſs is without levity, and his Penſiveneſs without aſperity.

Through theſe two poems the images are properly ſelected, and nicely diſtinguiſhed; but the colours of the diction ſeem not ſufficiently diſcriminated. I know not whether the characters are kept ſufficiently apart. No mirth can, indeed, be found in his melancholy; but I am afraid that I always meet ſome melancholy in his mirth. They are two noble efforts of imagination *.

The greateſt of his juvenile performances is the *Maſk of Comus*; in which may very plainly be diſ-

* Mr. Warton intimates (and there can be little doubt of the truth of his conjecture) that Milton borrowed many of the images in theſe two fine poems from "Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy," a book publiſhed in 1624, and at ſundry times ſince, abounding in learning, curious information, and pleaſantry. Mr. Warton ſays, that Milton appears to have been an attentive reader thereof; and to this aſſertion I add of my own knowledge, that it was a book that Dr. Johnſon frequently reſorted to, as many others have done, for amuſement after the fatigue of ſtudy.

covered the dawn or twilight of *Paradiſe Loſt*. Milton appears to have formed very early that ſyſtem of diction, and mode of verſe, which his maturer judgement approved, and from which he never endeavoured nor deſired to deviate.

Nor does *Comus* afford only a ſpecimen of his language; it exhibits likewiſe his power of deſcription and his vigour of ſentiment, employed in the praiſe and defence of virtue. A work more truly poetical is rarely found; alluſions, images, and deſcriptive epithets, embelliſh almoſt every period with laviſh decoration. As a ſeries of lines, therefore, it may be conſidered as worthy of all the admiration with which the votaries have received it.

As a drama it is deficient. The action is not probable. A Maſque, in thoſe parts where ſupernatural intervention is admitted, muſt indeed be given up to all the freaks of imagination; but, ſo far as the action is merely human, it ought to be reaſonable, which can hardly be ſaid of the conduct of the two brothers; who, when their ſiſter ſinks with fatigue in a pathleſs wilderneſs, wander both away together in ſearch of berries too far to find their way back, and leave a helpleſs Lady to all the ſadneſs and danger of ſolitude. This however is a defect overbalanced by its convenience.

What deſerves more reprehenſion is, that the prologue ſpoken in the wild wood by the attendant Spirit is addreſſed to the audience; a mode of communication ſo contrary to the nature of dramatick repreſentation, that no precedents can ſupport it.

The diſcourſe of the Spirit is too long; an objection that may be made to almoſt all the following ſpeeches: they

they have not the ſpritelineſs of a dialogue animated by reciprocal contention, but ſeem rather declamations deliberately compoſed, and formally repeated, on a moral queſtion. The auditor therefore liſtens as to a lecture, without paſſion, without anxiety.

The ſong of Comus has airineſs and jollity; but, what may recommend Milton's morals as well as his poetry, the invitations to pleaſure are ſo general, that they excite no diſtinct images of corrupt enjoyment, and take no dangerous hold on the fancy.

The following ſoliloquies of Comus and the Lady are elegant, but tedious. The ſong muſt owe much to the voice, if it ever can delight. At laſt the Brothers enter, with too much tranquillity; and when they have feared leſt their ſiſter ſhould be in danger, and hoped that ſhe is not in danger, the Elder makes a ſpeech in praiſe of chaſtity, and the Younger finds how fine it is to be a philoſopher.

Then deſcends the Spirit in form of a ſhepherd; and the Brother, inſtead of being in haſte to aſk his help, praiſes his ſinging, and enquires his buſineſs in that place. It is remarkable, that at this interview the brother is taken with a ſhort fit of rhyming. The Spirit relates that the Lady is in the power of Comus; the Brother moraliſes again; and the Spirit makes a long narration, of no uſe becauſe it is falſe, and therefore unſuitable to a good Being.

In all theſe parts the language is poetical, and the ſentiments are generous; but there is ſomething wanting to allure attention.

The diſpute between the Lady and Comus is the moſt animated and affecting ſcene of the drama, and wants nothing but a briſker reciprocation of objections

objections and replies, to invite attention, and detain it.

The ſongs are vigorous, and full of imagery; but they are harſh in their diction, and not very muſical in their numbers.

Throughout the whole, the figures are too bold, and the language too luxuriant for dialogue. It is a drama in the epick ſtyle, inelegantly ſplendid, and tediouſly inſtructive.

The *Sonnets* were written in different parts of Milton's life, upon different occaſions. They deſerve not any particular criticiſm; for of the beſt it can only be ſaid, that they are not bad; and perhaps only the eighth and the twenty-firſt are truly entitled to this ſlender commendation. The fabrick of a ſonnet, however adapted to the Italian language, has ever ſucceeded in ours, which, having greater variety of termination, requires the rhymes to be often changed.

Thoſe little pieces may be diſpatched without much anxiety; a greater work calls for greater care. I am now to examine *Paradiſe Loſt*; a poem, which, conſidered with reſpect to deſign, may claim the firſt place, and with reſpect to performance the ſecond, among the productions of the human mind.

By the general conſent of criticks, the firſt praiſe of genius is due to the writer of an epick poem, as it requires an aſſemblage of all the powers which are ſingly ſufficient for other compoſitions. Poetry is the art of uniting pleaſure with truth, by calling imagination to the help of reaſon. Epick poetry undertakes to teach the moſt important truths by the moſt pleaſing precepts, and therefore relates ſome great event in the moſt affecting manner. Hiſtory muſt ſupply the writer with

with the rudiments of narration, which he muſt improve and exalt by a nobler art, muſt animate by dramatick energy, and diverſify by retroſpection and anticipation; morality muſt teach him the exact bounds, and different ſhades, of vice and virtue; from policy, and the practice of life, he has to learn the diſcriminations of character, and the tendency of the paſſions, either ſingle or combined; and phyſiology muſt ſupply him with illuſtrations and images. To put theſe materials to poetical uſe, is required an imagination capable of painting nature, and realizing fiction. Nor is he yet a poet till he has attained the whole extenſion of his language, diſtinguiſhed all the delicacies of phraſe, and all the colours of words, and learned to adjuſt their different ſounds to all the varieties of metrical modulation.

Boſſu is of opinion that the poet's firſt work is to find a *moral*, which his fable is afterwards to illuſtrate and eſtabliſh. This ſeems to have been the proceſs only of Milton; the moral of other poems is incidental and conſequent; in Milton's only it is eſſential and intrinſick. His purpoſe was the moſt uſeful and the moſt arduous; *to vindicate the ways of God to man*; to ſhew the reaſonableneſs of religion, and the neceſſity of obedience to the Divine Law.

To convey this moral, there muſt be a *fable*, a narration artfully conſtructed, ſo as to excite curioſity, and ſurpriſe expectation. In this part of his work, Milton muſt be confeſſed to have equalled every other poet. He has involved in his account of the Fall of Man the events which preceded, and thoſe that were to follow it: he has interwoven the whole ſyſtem of theology with ſuch propriety, that every part appears to be neceſſary; and ſcarcely any recital is wiſhed ſhorter for

for the ſake of quickening the progreſs of the main action.

The ſubject of an epick poem is naturally an event of great importance. That of Milton is not the deſtruction of a city, the conduct of a colony, or the foundation of an empire. His ſubject is the fate of worlds, the revolutions of heaven and of earth; rebellion, againſt the Supreme King, raiſed by the higheſt order of created beings; the overthrow of their hoſt, and the puniſhment of their crime; the creation of a new race of reaſonable creatures; their original happineſs and innocence, their forfeiture of immortality, and their reſtoration to hope and peace.

Great events can be haſtened or retarded only by perſons of elevated dignity. Before the greatneſs diſplayed in Milton's poem, all other greatneſs ſhrinks away. The weakeſt of his agents are the higheſt and nobleſt of human beings, the original parents of mankind; with whoſe actions the elements conſented; on whoſe rectitude, or deviation of will, depended the ſtate of terreſtrial nature, and the condition of all the future inhabitants of the globe.

Of the other agents in the poem, the chief are ſuch as it is irreverence to name on ſlight occaſions. The reſt were lower powers;

> —of which the leaſt could wield
> Thoſe elements, and arm him with the force
> Of all their regions;

powers, which only the controul of Omnipotence reſtrains from laying creation waſte, and filling the vaſt expanſe of ſpace with ruin and confuſion. To diſplay the motives and actions of beings thus ſuperiour, ſo far as human reaſon can examine them, or human imagination

tion repreſent them, is the taſk which this mighty poet has undertaken and performed.

In the examination of epick poems much ſpeculation is commonly employed upon the *characters*. The characters in the *Paradiſe Loſt*, which admit of examination, are thoſe of angels and of man; of angels good and evil; of man in his innocent and ſinful ſtate.

Among the angels, the virtue of Raphael is mild and placid, of eaſy condeſcenſion and free communication; that of Michael is regal and lofty, and, as may ſeem, attentive to the dignity of his own nature. Abdiel and Gabriel appear occaſionally, and act as every incident requires; the ſolitary fidelity of Abdiel is very amiably painted.

Of the evil angels the characters are more diverſified. To Satan, as Addiſon obſerves, ſuch ſentiments are given as ſuit *the moſt exalted and moſt depraved being*. Milton has been cenſured, by Clarke *, for the impiety which ſometimes breaks from Satan's mouth †. For there are thoughts, as he juſtly remarks, which no obſervation of character can juſtify, becauſe no good man would willingly permit them to paſs, however tranſiently, through his own mind. To make Satan

* Eſſay on Study. Orig. Edit.

† Dr. Johnſon ſhould have ſaid what Clarke, as that ſurname without an adjunct is now almoſt appropriated by writers to Dr. Samuel Clarke. The perſon here meant was a ſchoolmaſter at Hull, the author of ſundry tranſlations of the claſſics and other uſeful ſchool-books, and, beſides th "Eſſay on ſtudy" here referred to, of a tract in the controverſy about the foundations of morality, and the principle of action in the Divine Being, in which Dr. Clarke, Wollaſton, Hutcheſon, Balguy, Grove, and others were engaged; a ſummary of which controverſy is contained in "Dr. Price's Review of the principal queſtions and difficulties in morals, 1758," 8vo.

ſpeak

ſpeak as a rebel, without any ſuch expreſſions as might taint the reader's imagination, was indeed one of the great difficulties in Milton's undertaking, and I cannot but think that he has extricated himſelf with great happineſs. There is in Satan's ſpeeches little that can give pain to a pious ear. The language of rebellion cannot be the ſame with that of obedience. The malignity of Satan foams in haughtineſs and obſtinacy; but his expreſſions are commonly general, and no otherwiſe offenſive than as they are wicked.

The other chiefs of the celeſtial rebellion are very judiciouſly deſcriminated in the firſt and ſecond books; and the ferocious character of Moloch appears, both in the battle and the council, with exact conſiſtency.

To Adam and to Eve are given, during their innocence, ſuch ſentiments as innocence can generate and utter. Their love is pure benevolence and mutual veneration; their repaſts are without luxury, and their diligence without toil. Their addreſſes to their Maker have little more than the voice of admiration and gratitude. Fruition left them nothing to aſk, and Innocence left them nothing to fear.

But with guilt enter diſtruſt and diſcord, mutual accuſation, and ſtubborn ſelf-defence; they regard each other with alienated minds, and dread their Creator as the avenger of their tranſgreſſion. At laſt they ſeek ſhelter in his mercy, ſoften to repentance, and melt in ſupplication. Both before and after the Fall, the ſuperiority of Adam is diligently ſuſtained.

Of the *probable* and the *marvellous*, two parts of a vulgar epic poem, which immerge the critick in deep conſideration, the *Paradiſe Loſt* requires little to be ſaid.

ſaid. It contains the hiſtory of a miracle, of Creation or Redemption; it diſplays the power and the mercy of the Supreme Being; the probable therefore is marvellous, and the marvellous is probable. The ſubſtance of the narrative is truth; and as truth allows no choice, it is, like neceſſity, ſuperior to rule. To the accidental or adventitious parts, as to every thing human, ſome ſlight exceptions may be made. But the main fabrick is immovably ſupported.

It is juſtly remarked by Addiſon, that this poem has, by the nature of its ſubject, the advantage above all others, that it is univerſally and perpetually intereſting. All mankind will, through all ages, bear the ſame relation to Adam and to Eve, and muſt partake of that good and evil which extend to themſelves.

Of the *machinery*, ſo called from Θεὸς ἀπὸ μηχανῆς, by which is meant the occaſional interpoſition of ſupernatural power, another fertile topic of critical remarks, here is no room to ſpeak, becauſe every thing is done under the immediate and viſible direction of Heaven; but the rule is ſo far obſerved, that no part of the action could have been accompliſhed by any other means.

Of *epiſodes*, I think there are only two, contained in Raphael's relation of the war in heaven, and Michael's prophetic account of the changes to happen in this world. Both are cloſely connected with the great action; one was neceſſary to Adam as a warning, the other as a conſolation.

To the compleatneſs or *integrity* of the deſign nothing can be objected; it has diſtinctly and clearly what Ariſtotle requires, a beginning, a middle, and an end. There is perhaps no poem, of the ſame length, from which ſo little can be taken without apparent mutilation.

tion. Here are no funeral games, nor is there any long deſcription of a ſhield. The ſhort digreſſions at the beginning of the third, ſeventh, and ninth books, might doubtleſs be ſpared; but ſuperfluities ſo beautiful, who would take away? or who does not wiſh that the author of the *Iliad* had gratified ſucceeding ages with a little knowledge of himſelf? Perhaps no paſſages are more frequently or more attentively read than thoſe extrinſick paragraphs; and, ſince the end of poetry is pleaſure, that cannot be unpoetical with which all are pleaſed.

The queſtions, whether the action of the poem be ſtrictly *one*, whether the poem can be properly termed *heroick*, and who is the hero, are raiſed by ſuch readers as draw their principles of judgement rather from books than from reaſon. Milton, though he intituled *Paradiſe Loſt* only a *poem*, yet calls it himſelf *heroick ſong*. Dryden, petulantly and indecently, denies the heroiſm of Adam, becauſe he was overcome; but there is no reaſon why the hero ſhould not be unfortunate, except eſtabliſhed practice, ſince ſucceſs and virtue do not go neceſſarily together. Cato is the hero of Lucan; but Lucan's authority will not be ſuffered by Quintilian to decide. However, if ſucceſs be neceſſary, Adam's deceiver was at laſt cruſhed; Adam was reſtored to his Maker's favour, and therefore may ſecurely reſume his human rank.

After the ſcheme and fabrick of the poem, muſt be conſidered its component parts, the ſentiments and the diction.

The *ſentiments*, as expreſſive of manners, or appropriated to characters, are, for the greater part, unexceptionably juſt.

Splendid

Splendid paſſages, containing leſſons of morality, or precepts of prudence, occur ſeldom. Such is the original formation of this poem, that as it admits no human manners till the Fall, it can give little aſſiſtance to human conduct. Its end is to raiſe the thoughts above ſublunary cares or pleaſures. Yet the praiſe of that fortitude, with which Abdiel maintained his ſingularity of virtue againſt the ſcorn of multitudes, may be accommodated to all times; and Raphael's reproof of Adam's curioſity after the planetary motions, with the anſwer returned by Adam, may be confidently oppoſed to any rule of life which any poet has delivered.

The thoughts which are occaſionally called forth in the progreſs, are ſuch as could only be produced by an imagination in the higheſt degree fervid and active, to which materials were ſupplied by inceſſant ſtudy and unlimited curioſity. The heat of Milton's mind might be ſaid to ſublimate his learning, to throw off into his work the ſpirit of ſcience, unmingled with its groſſer parts.

He had conſidered creation in its whole extent, and his deſcriptions are therefore learned. He had accuſtomed his imagination to unreſtrained indulgence, and his conceptions therefore were extenſive. The characteriſtick quality of his poem is ſublimity. He ſometimes deſcends to the elegant, but his element is the great. He can occaſionally inveſt himſelf with grace; but his natural port is gigantick loftineſs *. He can pleaſe when pleaſure is required; but it is his peculiar power to aſtoniſh.

* Algarotti terms it *giganteſca ſublimità Miltoniana*. Orig. Edit.

He ſeems to have been well acquainted with his own genius, and to know what it was that Nature had beſtowed upon him more bountifully than upon others; the power of diſplaying the vaſt, illuminating the ſplendid, enforcing the awful, darkening the gloomy, and aggravating the dreadful: he therefore choſe a ſubject on which too much could not be ſaid, on which he might tire his fancy without the cenſure of extravagance.

The appearances of nature, and the occurrences of life, did not ſatiate his appetite of greatneſs. To paint things as they are, requires a minute attention, and employs the memory rather than the fancy. Milton's delight was to ſport in the wide regions of poſſibility; reality was a ſcene too narrow for his mind. He ſent his faculties out upon diſcovery, into worlds where only imagination can travel, and delighted to form new modes of exiſtence, and furniſh ſentiment and action to ſuperior beings, to trace the counſels of hell, or accompany the choirs of heaven.

But he could not be always in other worlds; he muſt ſometimes reviſit earth, and tell of things viſible and known. When he cannot raiſe wonder by the ſublimity of his mind, he gives delight by its fertility.

Whatever be his ſubject, he never fails to fill the imagination. But his images and deſcriptions of the ſcenes or operations of Nature do not ſeem to be always copied from original form, nor to have the freſhneſs, racineſs, and energy of immediate obſervation. He ſaw Nature, as Dryden expreſſes it, *through the ſpectacles of books*; and on moſt occaſions calls learning to his aſſiſtance. The garden of Eden brings to his mind the vale of *Enna*, where Proſerpine was gather-

ing

ng flowers. Satan makes his way through fighting elements, like *Argo* between the *Cyanean* rocks, or *Ulyſſes* between the two *Sicilian* whirlpools, when he hunned *Charybdis* on the larboard. The mythological illuſions have been juſtly cenſured, as not being always uſed with notice of their vanity; but they contribute variety to the narration, and produce an alternate exerciſe of the memory and the fancy.

His ſimilies are leſs numerous, and more various, than thoſe of his predeceſſors. But he does not confine himſelf within the limits of rigorous compariſon: his great excellence is amplitude, and he expands the adventitious image beyond the dimenſions which the occaſion required. Thus comparing the ſhield of Satan to the orb of the Moon, he crouds the imagination with the diſcovery of the teleſcope, and all the wonders which the teleſcope diſcovers.

Of his moral ſentiments it is hardly praiſe to affirm that they excel thoſe of all other poets; for this ſuperiority he was indebted to his acquaintance with the ſacred writings. The ancient epick poets, wanting the light of Revelation, were very unſkilful teachers of virtue: their principal characters may be great, but they are not amiable. The reader may riſe from their works with a greater degree of active or paſſive fortitude, and ſometimes of prudence; but he will be able to carry away few precepts of juſtice, and none of mercy.

From the Italian writers it appears, that the advantages of even Chriſtian knowledge may be poſſeſſed in vain. Arioſto's pravity is generally known; and though the *Deliverance of Jeruſalem* may be conſidered

as a ſacred ſubject, the poet has been very ſparing of moral inſtruction.

In Milton every line breathes ſanctity of thought and purity of manners, except when the train of the narration requires the introduction of the rebellious ſpirits; and even they are compelled to acknowledge their ſubjection to God, in ſuch a manner as excites reverence, and confirms piety.

Of human beings there are but two; but thoſe two are the parents of mankind, venerable before their fall for dignity and innocence, and amiable after it for repentance and ſubmiſſion. In their firſt ſtate their affection is tender without weakneſs, and their piety ſublime without preſumption. When they have ſinned, they ſhew how diſcord begins in mutual frailty, and how it ought to ceaſe in mutual forbearance; how confidence of the divine favour is forfeited by ſin, and how hope of pardon may be obtained by penitence and prayer. A ſtate of innocence we can only conceive, if indeed, in our preſent miſery, it be poſſible to conceive it; but the ſentiments and worſhip proper to a fallen and offending being, we have all to learn, as we have all to practiſe.

The poet, whatever be done, is always great. Our progenitors, in their firſt ſtate, converſed with angels; even when folly and ſin had degraded them, they had not in their humiliation *the port of mean ſuitors*; and they riſe again to reverential regard, when we find that their prayers were heard.

As human paſſions did not enter the world before the Fall, there is in the *Paradiſe Loſt* little opportunity for the pathetick; but what little there is has not been loſt. That paſſion which is peculiar to rational nature,

nature, the anguiſh ariſing from the conſciouſneſs of tranſgreſſion, and the horrours attending the ſenſe of the Divine Diſpleaſure, are very juſtly deſcribed and forcibly impreſſed. But the paſſions are moved only on one occaſion; ſublimity is the general and prevailing quality in this poem; ſublimity variouſly modified, ſometimes deſcriptive, ſometives argumentative.

The defects and faults of *Paradiſe Loſt*, for faults and defects every work of man muſt have, it is the buſineſs of impartial criticiſm to diſcover. As, in diſplaying the excellence of Milton, I have not made long quotations, becauſe of ſelecting beauties there had been no end, I ſhall in the ſame general manner mention that which ſeems to deſerve cenſure; for what Engliſhman can take delight in tranſcribing paſſages, which, if they leſſen the reputation of Milton, diminiſh in ſome degree the honour of our country?

The generality of my ſcheme does not admit the frequent notice of verbal inaccuracies; which Bentley, perhaps better ſkilled in grammar than in poetry, has often found, though he ſometimes made them, and which he imputed to the obtruſions of a reviſer whom the author's blindneſs obliged him to employ. A ſuppoſition raſh and groundleſs, if he thought it true; and vile and pernicious, if, as is ſaid, he in private allowed it to be falſe.

The plan of *Paradiſe Loſt* has this inconvenience, that it compriſes neither human actions nor human manners. The man and woman who act and ſuffer, are in a ſtate which no other man or woman can ever know. The reader finds no tranſaction in which he can be engaged; beholds no condition in which he

can by any effort of imagination place himſelf; he has, therefore, little natural curioſity or ſympathy.

We all, indeed, feel the effects of Adam's diſobedience; we all ſin like Adam, and like him muſt all bewail our offences; we have reſtleſs and inſidious enemies in the fallen angels, and in the bleſſed ſpirits we have guardians and friends; in the Redemption of mankind we hope to be included; in the deſcription of heaven and hell we are ſurely intereſted, as we are all to reſide hereafter either in the regions of horrour or bliſs.

But theſe truths are too important to be new; they have been taught to our infancy; they have mingled with our ſolitary thoughts and familiar converſation, and are habitually interwoven with the whole texture of life. Being therefore not new, they raiſe no unaccuſtomed emotion in the mind; what we knew before, we cannot learn; what is not unexpected, cannot ſurpriſe.

Of the ideas ſuggeſted by theſe awful ſcenes, from ſome we recede with reverence, except when ſtated hours require their aſſociation; and from others we ſhrink with horrour, or admit them only as ſalutary inflictions, as counterpoiſes to our intereſts and paſſions. Such images rather obſtruct the career of fancy than incite it.

Pleaſure and terrour are indeed the genuine ſources of poetry; but poetical pleaſure muſt be ſuch as human imagination can at leaſt conceive, and poetical terrour ſuch as human ſtrength and fortitude may combat. The good and evil of Eternity are too ponderous for the wings of wit; the mind ſinks under them in paſſive

helpleſsneſs, content with calm belief and humoration.

wn truths, however, may take a different apce, and be conveyed to the mind by a new train rmediate images. This Milton has undertaken, rformed with pregnancy and vigour of mind pecu- himſelf. Whoever conſiders the few radical ns which the Scriptures afforded him, will wonwhat energetick operation he expanded them to xtent, and ramified them to ſo much variety, ued as he was by religious reverence from licenſs of fiction.

e is a full diſplay of the united force of ſtudy nius; of a great accumulation of materials, with nent to digeſt, and fancy to combine them: was able to ſelect from nature, or from ſtory, an ancient fable, or from modern ſcience, whatuld illuſtrate or adorn his thoughts. An accuon of knowledge impregnated his mind, ferd by ſtudy, and exalted by imagination.

as been therefore ſaid, without an indecent hye, by one of his encomiaſts, that in reading *iſe Loſt* we read a book of univerſal knowledge.

original deficience cannot be ſupplied. The of human intereſt is always felt. *Paradiſe Loſt* of the books which the reader admires and lays and forgets to take up again. None ever it longer than it is. Its peruſal is a duty rather pleaſure. We read Milton for inſtruction, reirraſſed, and overburdened, and look elſewhere creation; we deſert our maſter, and ſeek for nions.

Another inconvenience of Milton's deſign is, that it requires the deſcription of what cannot be deſcribed, the agency of ſpirits. He ſaw that immateriality ſupplied no images, and that he could not ſhow angels acting but by inſtruments of action; he therefore inveſted them with form and matter. This, being neceſſary, was therefore defenſible; and he ſhould have ſecured the conſiſtency of his ſyſtem, by keeping immateriality out of ſight, and enticing his reader to drop it from his thoughts. But he has unhappily perplexed his poetry with his philoſophy. His infernal and celeſtial powers are ſometimes pure ſpirit, and ſometimes animated body. When Satan walks with his lance upon the *burning marle*, he has a body; when, in his paſſage between hell and the new world, he is in danger of ſinking in the vacuity, and is ſupported by a guſt of riſing vapours, he has a body; when he animates the toad, he ſeems to be mere ſpirit, that can penetrate matter at pleaſure; when he *ſtarts up in his own ſhape*, he has at leaſt a determined form; and when he is brought before Gabriel, he has *a ſpear and a ſhield*, which he had the power of hiding in the toad, though the arms of the contending angels are evidently material.

The vulgar inhabitants of Pandæmonium, being *incorporeal ſpirits*, are *at large, though without number*, in a limited ſpace; yet in the battle, when they were overwhelmed by mountains, their armour hurt them, *cruſhed in upon their ſubſtance, now grown groſs by ſinning*. This likewiſe happened to the uncorrupted angels, who were overthrown the *ſooner for their arms, for unarmed they might eaſily as ſpirits have evaded by contraction or remove*. Even as ſpirits they are hardly

ſpiritual;

ſpiritual; for *contraction* and *remove* are images of matter; but if they could have eſcaped without their armour, they might have eſcaped from it, and left only the empty cover to be battered. Uriel, when he rides on a ſun-beam, is material; Satan is material when he is afraid of the proweſs of Adam.

The confuſion of ſpirit and matter which pervades the whole narration of the war of heaven fills it with incongruity; and the book, in which it is related, is, I believe, the favourite of children, and gradually neglected as knowledge is increaſed.

After the operation of immaterial agents, which cannot be explained, may be conſidered that of allegorical perſons, which have no real exiſtence. To exalt cauſes into agents, to inveſt abſtract ideas with form, and animate them with activity, has always been the right of poetry. But ſuch airy beings are, for the moſt part, ſuffered only to do their natural office, and retire. Thus Fame tells a tale, and Victory hovers over a general, or perches on a ſtandard; but Fame and Victory can do more. To give them any real employment, or aſcribe to them any material agency, is to make them allegorical no longer, but to ſhock the mind by aſcribing effects to non-entity. In the *Prometheus* of Æſchylus, we ſee *Violence* and *Strength*, and in the *Alceſtis* of Euripides, we ſee *Death*, brought upon the ſtage, all as active perſons of the drama; but no precedents can juſtify abſurdity.

Milton's allegory of Sin and Death is undoubtedly faulty. Sin is indeed the mother of Death, and may be allowed to be the portreſs of hell; but when they ſtop the journey of Satan, a journey deſcribed as real, and when Death offers him battle, the allegory is

broken.

broken. That Sin and Death ſhould have ſhewn the way to hell, might have been allowed; but they cannot facilitate the paſſage by building a bridge, becauſe the difficulty of Satan's paſſage is deſcribed as real and ſenſible, and the bridge ought to be only figurative. The hell aſſigned to the rebellious ſpirits is deſcribed as not leſs local than the reſidence of man. It is placed in ſome diſtant part of ſpace, ſeparated from the regions of harmony and order by a chaotick waſte and an unoccupied vacuity; but *Sin* and *Death* worked up a *mole* of *aggravated ſoil*, cemented with *aſphaltus*; a work too bulky for ideal architects.

This unſkilful allegory appears to me one of the greateſt faults of the poem; and to this there was no temptation, but the author's opinion of its beauty.

To the conduct of the narrative ſome objections may be made. Satan is with great expectation brought before Gabriel in Paradiſe, and is ſuffered to go away unmoleſted. The creation of man is repreſented as the conſequence of the vacuity left in heaven by the expulſion of the rebels; yet Satan mentions it as a report *riſe in heaven* before his departure.

To find ſentiments for the ſtate of innocence, was very difficult; and ſomething of anticipation perhaps is now and then diſcovered. Adam's diſcourſe of dreams ſeems not to be the ſpeculation of a new-created being. I know not whether his anſwer to the angel's reproof for curioſity does not want ſomething of propriety; it is the ſpeech of a man acquainted with many other men. Some philoſophical notions, eſpecially when the philoſophy is falſe, might have been better omitted. The angel, in a compariſon, ſpeaks of *timorous deer*, before deer were yet timorous, and before Adam could underſtand the compariſon.

Dryden

Dryden remarks, that Milton has ſome flats among his elevations. This is only to ſay, that all the parts are not equal. In every work, one part muſt be for the ſake of others; a palace muſt have paſſages; a poem muſt have tranſitions. It is no more to be required that wit ſhould always be blazing, than that the ſun ſhould always ſtand at noon. In a great work there is a viciſſitude of luminous and opaque parts, as there is in the world a ſucceſſion of day and night. Milton, when he has expatiated in the ſky, may be allowed ſometimes to reviſit earth; for what other author ever ſoared ſo high, or ſuſtained his flight ſo long?

Milton, being well verſed in the Italian poets, appears to have borrowed often from them; and, as every man catches ſomething from his companions, his deſire of imitating Arioſto's levity has diſgraced his work with the *Paradiſe of Fools*; a fiction not in itſelf ill-imagined, but too ludicrous for its place.

His play on words, in which he delights too often; his equivocations, which Bentley endeavours to defend by the example of the ancients; his unneceſſary and ungraceful uſe of terms of art; it is not neceſſary to mention, becauſe they are eaſily remarked, and generally cenſured, and at laſt bear ſo little proportion to the whole, that they ſcarcely deſerve the attention of a critick.

Such are the faults of that wonderful performance *Paradiſe Loſt*; which he who can put in balance with its beauties muſt be conſidered not as nice but as dull, as leſs to be cenſured for want of candour, than pitied for want of ſenſibility.

Of

Of *Paradiſe Regained*, the general judgement ſeems now to be right, that it is in many parts elegant, and every-where inſtructive. It was not to be ſuppoſed that the writer of *Paradiſe Loſt* could ever write without great effuſions of fancy, and exalted precepts of wiſdom. The baſis of *Paradiſe Regained* is narrow; a dialogue without action can never pleaſe like an union of the narrative and dramatic powers. Had this poem been written not by Milton, but by ſome imitator, it would have claimed and received univerſal praiſe.

If *Paradiſe Regained* has been too much depreciated, *Sampſon Agoniſtes* has in requital been too much admired. It could only be by long prejudice, and the bigotry of learning, that Milton could prefer the ancient tragedies, with their encumbrance of a chorus, to the exhibitions of the French and Engliſh ſtages; and it is only by a blind confidence in the reputation of Milton, that a drama can be praiſed in which the intermediate parts have neither cauſe nor conſequence, neither haſten nor retard the cataſtrophe.

In this tragedy are however many particular beauties, many juſt ſentiments and ſtriking lines; but it wants that power of attracting the attention which a well-connected plan produces.

Milton would not have excelled in dramatic writing; he knew human nature only in the groſs, and had never ſtudied the ſhades of character, nor the combinations of concurring, or the perplexity of contending paſſions. He had read much, and knew what books could teach; but had mingled little in the world, and was deficient in the knowledge which experience muſt confer.

Through

Through all his greater works there prevails an uni
rm peculiarity of *Diction*, a mode and caſt of expreſ-
on which bears little reſemblance to that of any for-
er writer, and which is ſo far removed from com-
on uſe, that an unlearned reader, when he firſt
pens his book, finds himſelf ſurpriſed by a new
nguage.

This novelty has been, by thoſe who can find nothing
rong in Milton, imputed to his laborious endeavours
ter words ſuitable to the grandeur of his ideas.
ur language, ſays Addiſon, *ſunk under him*. But the
uth is, that, both in proſe and verſe, he had formed
is ſtyle by a perverſe and pedantick principle. He was
ſirous to uſe Engliſh words with a foreign idiom.
his in all his proſe is diſcovered and condemned; for
ere judgement operates freely, neither ſoftened by the
auty, nor awed by the dignity of his thoughts; but
ch is the power of his poetry, that his call is obeyed
ithout reſiſtance, the reader feels himſelf in captivity
a higher and a nobler mind, and criticiſm ſinks in
lmiration.

Milton's ſtyle was not modified by his ſubject: what
ſhown with greater extent in *Paradiſe Loſt*, may
found in *Comus*. One ſource of his peculiarity was
s familiarity with the Tuſcan poets: the diſpoſition
his words is, I think, frequently Italian; perhaps
metimes combined with other tongues. Of him, at
ſt, may be ſaid what Jonſon ſays of Spenſer, that *he*
rote no language, but has formed what *Butler* calls a
abyloniſh Dialect, in itſelf harſh and barbarous, but
ade by exalted genius, and extenſive learning, the
hicle of ſo much inſtruction and ſo much plea-
ſure,

ſure, that, like other lovers, we find grace in its deformity.

Whatever be the faults of his diction, he cannot want the praiſe of copiouſneſs and variety: he was maſter of his language in its full extent; and has ſelected the melodious words with ſuch diligence, that from his book alone the Art of Engliſh Poetry might be learned.

After his diction, ſomething muſt be ſaid of his *verſification. The meaſure*, he ſays, *is the Engliſh heroick verſe without rhyme.* Of this mode he had many examples among the Italians, and ſome in his own country. The Earl of Surrey is ſaid to have tranſlated one of Virgil's books without rhyme; and, beſides our tragedies, a few ſhort poems had appeared in blank verſe, particularly one tending to reconcile the nation to Raleigh's wild attempt upon Guiana, and probably written by Raleigh himſelf. Theſe petty performances cannot be ſuppoſed to have much influenced Milton, who more probably took his hint from Triſſino's *Italia Liberata*; and, finding blank verſe eaſier than rhyme, was deſirous of perſuading himſelf that it is better.

Rhyme, he ſays, and ſays truly, *is no neceſſary adjunct of true poetry.* But perhaps, of poetry as a mental operation, metre or muſick is no neceſſary adjunct: it is however by the muſick of metre that poetry has been diſcriminated in all languages; and in languages melodiouſly conſtructed with a due proportion of long and ſhort ſyllables, metre is ſufficient. But one language cannot communicate its rules to another: where metre is ſcanty and imperfect, ſome help is neceſſary. The muſick of the Engliſh heroick line ſtrikes the ear ſo faintly that it is

ly loſt, unleſs all the ſyllables of every line co-operate ther: this co-operation can be only obtained by preſervation of every verſe unmingled with another diſtinct ſyſtem of ſounds; and this diſtinctneſs is ined and preſerved by the artifice of rhyme. The ety of pauſes, ſo much boaſted by the lovers of ık verſe, changes the meaſures of an Engliſh poet :he periods of a declaimer; and there are only a ſkilful and happy readers of Milton, who enable r audience to perceive where the lines end or be-

Blank verſe, ſaid an ingenious critick, *ſeems to be e only to the eye.*

'oetry may ſubſiſt without rhyme, but Engliſh ry will not often pleaſe; nor can rhyme ever be ly ſpared but where the ſubject is able to ſupport it-

Blank verſe makes ſome approach to that which alled the *lapidary ſtyle*; has neither the eaſineſs of ſe, nor the melody of numbers, and therefore s by long continuance. Of the Italian writers with- rhyme, whom Milton alleges as precedents, not is popular; what reaſon could urge in its defence, been confuted by the ear.

but, whatever be the advantage of rhyme, I cannot rail on myſelf to wiſh that Milton had been a mer; for I cannot wiſh his work to be other than it yet, like other heroes, he is to be admired rather ı imitated. He that thinks himſelf capable of niſhing, may write blank verſe; but thoſe that hope y to pleaſe, muſt condeſcend to rhyme.

The higheſt praiſe of genius is original invention. lton cannot be ſaid to have contrived the ſtructure an epick poem, and therefore owes reverence to that our and amplitude of mind to which all generations

muſt

muſt be indebted for the art of poe ration, for the texture of the fable, the variation of incidents, the interpoſition of dialogue, and all the ſtratagems that ſurpriſe and enchain attention. But, of all the borrowers from Homer, Milton is perhaps the leaſt indebted. He was naturally a thinker for himſelf, confident of his own abilities, and diſdainful of help or hindrance: he did not refuſe admiſſion to the thoughts or images of his predeceſſors, but he did not ſeek them. From his contemporaries he neither courted nor received ſupport; there is in his writings nothing by which the pride of other authors might be gratified, or favour gained; no exchange of praiſe, nor ſolicitation of ſupport. His great works were performed under diſcountenance, and in blindneſs, but difficulties vaniſhed at his touch; he was born for whatever is arduous; and his work is not the greateſt of heroick poems, only becauſe it is not the firſt.

BUTLER.

U T L E R.

F the great author of Hudibras there is a life prefixed to the latter editions of his poem, by an own writer, and therefore of diſputable authority; ome account is incidentally given by Wood, who ſſes the uncertainty of his own narrative; more ver than they knew cannot now be learned, and ng remains but to compare and copy them.

AMUEL BUTLER was born in the pariſh of ſham in Worceſterſhire, according to his biogra-, in 1612. This account Dr. Naſh finds confirmed ıe regiſter. He was chriſtened Feb. 14.

is father's condition is variouſly repreſented. d mentions him as competently wealthy; but Mr. ;ueville, the ſon of Butler's principal friend, ſays ras an honeſt farmer with ſome ſmall eſtate, who : a ſhift to educate his ſon at the grammar ſchool 'orceſter, under Mr. Henry Bright *, from whoſe care.

heſe are the words of the author of the ſhort account of But- reſixed to Hudibras, which Dr. Johnſon, notwithſtanding ıe ſays above, ſeems to have ſuppoſed was written by Mr. eville, the father; but the contrary is to be inferred from a

care he removed for a ſhort time to Cambridge; but, for a want of money, was never made a member of any college. Wood leaves us rather doubtful whether he went to Cambridge or Oxford; but at laſt makes him paſs ſix or ſeven years at Cambridge, without knowing in what hall or college: yet it can hardly be imagined that he lived ſo long in either univerſity, but as belonging to one houſe or another; and it is ſtill leſs likely that he could have ſo long inhabited a place of learning with ſo little dictinction as to leave his reſidence uncertain. Dr. Naſh has diſcovered that his father was owner of a houſe and a little land, worth about eight pounds a year, ſtill called *Butler's tenement*.

Wood has his information from his brother, whoſe narrative placed him at Cambridge, in oppoſition to that of his neighbours, which ſent him to Oxford.

ſubſequent paſſage, wherein the author laments that he had neither ſuch an acquaintance nor intereſt with Mr. Longueville, as to procure from him the golden remains of Butler there mentioned. He was probably led into this miſtake by a note in the Biogr. Brit. p. 1077, ſignifying, that the ſon of this gentleman was living in 1736.

Of this friend and generous patron of Butler, Mr. William Longueville, I find an account, written by a perſon who was well acquainted with him, to this effect, viz. that he was a conveyancing lawyer, and bencher of the Inner Temple, and had raiſed himſelf from a low beginning to very great eminence in that profeſſion; that he was [illegible], and learned, of ſpotleſs integrity; that he ſupported an [illegible] father who had ruined his fortunes by extravagance, and by his [illegible] and application re-edified a ruined family; that he ſupported Butler, who, but for him, muſt literally have ſtarved, and [illegible] from [illegible] the papers called his Remains. [illegible] of the [illegible]-keeper Guilford, p. [illegible]. Theſe have ſince been [illegible] to the [illegible] by Mr. [illegible] of Manchester; and the originals [illegible] the Rev. Dr. [illegible], maſter of Emanuel [illegible].

The

he brother's ſeems the beſt authority, till, by confeſſ-
g his inability to tell his hall or college, he gives
ſon to ſuſpect that he was reſolved to beſtow on him
academical education; but durſt not name a col-
e, for fear of detection.

He was for ſome time, according to the author of
Life, clerk to Mr. Jefferys of Earl's-Croomb in
orceſterſhire, an eminent juſtice of the peace. In
ſervice he had not only leiſure for ſtudy, but for
:reation: his amuſements were muſick and painting;
d the reward of his pencil was the friendſhip of the
lebrated Cooper. Some pictures, ſaid to be his,
:re ſhewn to Dr. Naſh, at Earl's Croomb; but when
enquired for them ſome years afterwards, he found
:m deſtroyed, to ſtop windows, and owns that they
rdly deſerved a better fate.

He was afterwards admitted into the family of the
unteſs of Kent, where he had the uſe of a library;
d ſo much recommended himſelf to Selden, that he
s often employed by him in literary buſineſs. Sel-
n, as is well known, was ſteward to the Counteſs, and
ſuppoſed to have gained much of his wealth by ma-
ging her eſtate.

In what character Butler was admitted into that
ady's ſervice, how long he continued in it, and why
left it, is, like the other incidents of his life, utterly
known.

The viciſſitudes of his condition placed him after-
rds in the family of Sir Samuel Luke, one of Crom-
ll's officers. Here he obſerved ſo much of the cha-
ter of the ſectaries, that he is ſaid to have writ-
n or begun his poem at this time; and it is likely
at ſuch a deſign would be formed in a place where

he ſaw the principles and practices of the rebels, audacious and undiſguiſed in the confidence of ſucceſs.

At length the King returned, and the time came in which loyalty hoped for its reward. Butler, however, was only made ſecretary to the Earl of Carbury, preſident of the principality of Wales; who conferred on him the ſtewardſhip of Ludlow Caſtle*, when the Court of the Marches was revived.

In this part of his life, he married Mrs. Herbert, a gentlewoman of a good family; and lived, ſays Wood, upon her fortune, having ſtudied the common law, but never practiſed it. A fortune ſhe had, ſays his biographer, but it was loſt by bad ſecurities.

In 1663 was publiſhed the firſt part, containing three cantos, of the poem of Hudibras, which, as Prior relates, was made known at Court by the taſte and influence of the Earl of Dorſet. When it was known, it was neceſſarily admired: the king quoted, the courtiers ſtudied, and the whole party of the royaliſts applauded it. Every eye watched for the golden ſhower which was to fall upon the author, who certainly was not without his part in the general expectation.

In 1664 the ſecond part appeared; the curioſity of the nation was rekindled, and the writer was again praiſed and elated. But praiſe was his whole reward. Clarendon, ſays Wood, gave him reaſon to hope for "places and employments of value and credit;" but no ſuch advantages did he ever obtain. It is reported

* This is ſaid by Mr. Thomas Warton, and with great appearance of truth, to have been a very honourable and lucrative office. Milton's Poems with notes.

that

hat the King once gave him three hundred guineas; ut of this temporary bounty I find no proof.

Wood relates that he was ſecretary to Villiers Duke of Buckingham, when he was Chancellor of Cambridge: this is doubted by the other writer, who yet allows the Duke to have been his frequent benefactor. That both theſe accounts are falſe there is reaſon to ſuſpect, from a ſtory told by Packe, in his account of the Life of Wycherley; and from ſome verſes which Mr. Thyer has publiſhed in the author's Remains.

"Mr. Wycherley," ſays Packe, "had always laid 'hold of an opportunity which offered of repreſenting 'to the Duke of Buckingham how well Mr. Butler 'had deſerved of the royal family, by writing his 'inimitable Hudibras; and that it was a reproach to 'the Court, that a perſon of his loyalty and wit 'ſhould ſuffer in obſcurity, and under the wants he 'did. The duke always ſeemed to hearken to him 'with attention enough; and, after ſome time, un'dertook to recommend his pretenſions to his Ma'jeſty. Mr. Wycherley, in hopes to keep him 'ſteady to his word, obtained of his Grace to name a 'day, when he might introduce that modeſt and un'fortunate poet to his new patron. At laſt an ap'pointment was made, and the place of meeting was 'agreed to be the Roebuck. Mr. Butler and his friend 'attended accordingly: the Duke joined them; but, 'as the d—l would have it, the door of the room 'where they ſat was open, and his Grace, who had 'ſeated himſelf near it, obſerving a pimp of his ac'quaintance (the creature too was a knight) trip by 'with a brace of Ladies, immediately quitted his en-

" gagement, to follow another kind of buſineſs, at
" which he was more ready than in doing good offices
" to men of deſert; though no one was better qualified
" than he, both in regard to his fortune and under-
" ſtanding, to protect them; and from that time to the
" day of his death, poor Butler never found the leaſt
" effect of his promiſe!"

Such is the ſtory. The verſes are written with a degree of acrimony, ſuch as neglect and diſappointment might naturally excite; and ſuch as it would be hard to imagine Butler capable of expreſſing againſt a man who had any claim to his gratitude.

Notwithſtanding this diſcouragement and neglect, he ſtill proſecuted his deſign; and in 1678 publiſhed the third part, which ſtill leaves the poem imperfect and abrupt. How much more he originally intended, or with what events the action was to be concluded, it is vain to conjecture. Nor can it be thought ſtrange that he ſhould ſtop here, however unexpectedly. To write without reward is ſufficiently unpleaſing. He had now arrived at an age when he might think it proper to be in jeſt no longer, and perhaps his health might now begin to fail.

He died in 1680; and Mr. Longueville, having unſucceſsfully ſolicited a ſubſcription for his interment in Weſtminſter Abbey, buried him at his own coſt in the church-yard of Covent Garden *. Dr. Simon Patrick read the ſervice.

Granger was informed by Dr. Pearce, who named for his authority Mr. Lowndes of the treaſury, that Butler

* In a note in the "Biographia Britannica," page 1075, he is ſaid, authority of the younger Mr. Longueville, to have lived for s Roſe Street, Covent-Garden, and alſo that he died r of theſe particulars is rendered highly probable by in the cemetery of that parish.

had

had an yearly penſion of an hundred pounds. This is contradicted by all tradition, by the complaints of Oldham, and by the reproaches of Dryden; and I am afraid will never be confirmed.

About ſixty years afterwards, Mr. Barber, a printer, Mayor of London, and a friend to Butler's principles, beſtowed on him a monument in Weſtminſter Abbey, thus inſcribed:

M. S.
SAMUELIS BUTLERI,
Qui *Strenſhamiæ* in agro *Vigorn.* nat. 1612,
obiit *Lond.* 1680.
Vir doctus imprimis, acer, integer;
Operibus Ingenii, non item præmiis, fœlix:
Satyrici apud nos Carminis Artifex egregius;
Quo ſimulatæ Religionis Larvam detraxit,
Et Perduellium ſcelera liberrime exagitavit;
Scriptorum in ſuo genere, Primus et Poſtremus.
Ne, cui vivo deerant ferè omnia,
Deeſſet etiam mortuo Tumulus,
Hoc tandem poſito marmore, curavit
JOHANNES BARBER, Civis *Londinenſis*, 1721.

After his death were publiſhed three ſmall volumes of his poſthumous works: I know not by whom collected, or by what authority aſcertained *; and, lately, two volumes more have been printed by Mr. Thyer of Mancheſter, indubitably genuine. From none of theſe pieces can his life be traced, or his character diſcovered. Some verſes, in the laſt collection, ſhew him to have been among thoſe who ridiculed the inſtitution of the Royal Society, of which the enemies were for ſome time very numerous and very acrimonious, for what reaſon it is hard to conceive, ſince the philoſophers profeſſed not to advance doctrines, but to pro-

* They were collected into one, and publiſhed in 12mo. 1732.

duce facts; and the moſt zealous enemy of innovation muſt admit the gradual progreſs of experience, however he may oppoſe hypothetical temerity.

In this miſt of obſcurity paſſed the life of Butler, a man whoſe name can only periſh with his language. The mode and place of his education are unknown; the events of his life are variouſly related; and all that can be told with certainty is, that he was poor.

THE poem of Hudibras is one of thoſe compoſitions of which a nation may juſtly boaſt; as the images which it exhibits are domeſtick, the ſentiments unborrowed and unexpected, and the ſtrain of diction original and peculiar. We muſt not, however, ſuffer the pride, which we aſſume as the countrymen of Butler, to make any encroachment upon juſtice, nor appropriate thoſe honours which others have a right to ſhare. The poem of Hudibras is not wholly Engliſh; the original idea is to be found in the hiſtory of Don Quixote; a book to which a mind of the greateſt powers may be indebted without diſgrace.

Cervantes ſhews a man, who having, by the inceſſant peruſal of incredible tales, ſubjected his underſtanding to his imagination, and familiariſed his mind by pertinacious meditation to trains of incredible events and ſcenes of impoſſible exiſtence, goes out in the pride of knighthood to redreſs wrongs, and defend virgins, to reſcue captive princeſſes, and tumble uſurpers from their thrones; attended by a ſquire, whoſe cunning, too low for the ſuſpicion of a generous mind, enables him often to cheat his maſter.

The hero of Butler is a Preſbyterian Juſtice, who, in the confidence of legal authority, and the rage of zealous ignorance, ranges the country to repreſs ſuperſtition and correct abuſes, accompanied by an independent Clerk, diſputatious and obſtinate, with whom he often debates, but never conquers him.

Cervantes had ſo much kindneſs for Don Quixote, that, however he embarraſſes him with abſurd diſtreſſes, he gives him ſo much ſenſe and virtue as may preſerve our eſteem: wherever he is, or whatever he does, he is made by matchleſs dexterity commonly ridiculous, but never contemptible.

But for poor Hudibras, his poet had no tenderneſs; he chuſes not that any pity ſhould be ſhewn or reſpect paid him: he gives him up at once to laughter and contempt, without any quality that can dignify or protect him.

In forming the character of Hudibras, and deſcribing his perſon and habiliments, the author ſeems to labour with a tumultuous confuſion of diſſimilar ideas. He had read the hiſtory of the mock knights-errant; he knew the notions and manners of a Preſbyterian magiſtrate, and tried to unite the abſurdities of both, however diſtant, in one perſonage. Thus he gives him that pedantic oſtentation of knowledge which has no relation to chivalry, and loads him with martial encumbrances that can add nothing to his civil dignity. He ſends him out a *colonelling*, and yet never brings him within ſight of war.

If Hudibras be conſidered as the repreſentative of the Preſbyterians, it is not eaſy to ſay why his weapons ſhould be repreſented as ridiculous or uſeleſs; for, whatever judgement might be paſſed upon their know-

ledge

ledge or their arguments, experience had ſufficiently ſhown that their ſwords were not to be deſpiſed.

The hero, thus compounded of ſwaggerer and pedant, of knight and juſtice, is led forth to action, with his ſquire Ralpho, an Independant enthuſiaſt.

Of the contexture of events planned by the author, which is called the action of the poem, ſince it is left imperfect, no judgement can be made. It is probable, that the hero was to be led through many luckleſs adventures, which would give occaſion, like his attack upon the *bear and fiddle*, to expoſe the ridiculous rigour of the ſectaries; like his encounter with Sidrophel and Whacum, to make ſuperſtition and credulity contemptible; or, like his recourſe to the low retailer of the law, diſcover the fraudulent practices of different profeſſions.

What ſeries of events he would have formed, or in what manner he would have rewarded or puniſhed his hero, it is now vain to conjecture. His work muſt have had, as it ſeems, the defect which Dryden imputes to Spenſer; the action could not have been one; thoſe could only have been a ſucceſſion of incidents, each of which might have happened without the reſt, and which could not all cooperate to any ſingle concluſion.

The diſcontinuity of the action might however have been eaſily forgiven, if there had been action enough: but I believe every reader regrets the paucity of events, and complains that in the poem of Hudibras, as in the hiſtory of Thucydides, there is more ſaid than done. The ſcenes are too ſeldom changed, and the attention is tired with long converſation.

It is indeed much more eaſy to form dialogues than to contrive adventures. Every poſition makes way for an

an argument, and every objection dictates an anſwer. When two diſputants are engaged upon a complicated and extenſive queſtion, the difficulty is not to continue, but to end the controverſy. But whether it be that we comprehend but few of the poſſibilities of life, or that life itſelf affords little variety, every man who has tried knows how much labour it will coſt to form ſuch a combination of circumſtances, as ſhall have at once the grace of novelty and credibility, and delight fancy without violence to reaſon.

Perhaps the Dialogue of this poem is not perfect. Some power of engaging the attention might have been added o it, by quicker reciprocation, by ſeaſonable interruptions, by ſudden queſtions, and by a nearer approach to dramatick ſpritelineſs; without which, fictitious ſpeeches will always tire, however ſparkling with ſentences, and however variegated with alluſions.

The great ſource of pleaſure is variety. Uniformity muſt tire at laſt, though it be uniformity of excellence. We love to expect; and, when expectation is diſappointed or gratified, we want to be again expecting. For this impatience of the preſent, whoever would pleaſe, muſt make proviſion. The ſkilful writer *irritat, mulcet*, makes a due diſtribution of the ſtill and animated parts. It is for want of this artful intertexture, and thoſe neceſſary changes, that the whole of a book may be tedious, though all the parts are praiſed.

If unexhauſtible wit could give perpetual pleaſure, no eye would ever leave half-read the work of Butler; for what poet has ever brought ſo many remote images ſo happily together? It is ſcarcely poſſible to peruſe a

page

page without finding ſome aſſociation of images that was never found before. By the firſt paragraph the reader is amuſed, by the next he is delighted, and by a few more ſtrained to aſtoniſhment; but aſtoniſhment is a toilſome pleaſure; he is ſoon weary of wondering, and longs to be diverted.

> Omnia vult belle Matko dicere, dic aliquando
> Et bene, dic neutrum, dic aliquando male.

Imagination is uſeleſs without knowledge: nature gives in vain the power of combination, unleſs ſtudy and obſervation ſupply materials to be combined. Butler's treaſures of knowledge appear proportioned to his expence: whatever topic employs his mind, he ſhews himſelf qualified to expand and illuſtrate it with all the acceſſories that books can furniſh: he is found not only to have trave'led the beaten road, but the bye-paths of literature; not only to have taken general ſurveys, but to have examined particulars with minute inſpection.

If the French boaſt the learning of Rabelais, we need not be afraid of confronting them with Butler.

But the moſt valuable parts of his performance are thoſe which retired ſtudy and native wit cannot ſupply. He that merely makes a book from books may be uſeful, but can ſcarcely be great. Butler had not ſuffered life to glide beſide him unſeen or unobſerved. He had watched with great diligence the operations of human nature, and traced the effects of opinion, humour, intereſt, and paſſion. From ſuch remarks proceeded that great number of ſententious diſtichs which have paſſed into converſation, and are added as proverbial axioms to the general ſtock of practical knowledge.

When

When any work has been viewed and admired, the firſt queſtion of intelligent curioſity is, how was it performed? Hudibras was not a haſty effuſion; it was not produced by a ſudden tumult of imagination, or a ſhort paroxyſm of violent labour. To accumulate ſuch a maſs of ſentiments at the call of accidental deſire, or of ſudden neceſſity, is beyond the reach and power of the moſt active and comprehenſive mind. I am informed by Mr. Thyer of Mancheſter, the excellent editor of this author's reliques, that he could ſhew ſomething like Hudibras in proſe. He has in his poſſeſſion the common-place book, in which Butler repoſited, not ſuch events or precepts as are gathered by reading; but ſuch remarks, ſimilitudes, alluſions, aſſemblages, or inferences, as occaſion prompted, or meditation produced; thoſe thoughts that were generated in his own mind, and might be uſefully applied to ſome future purpoſe. Such is the labour of thoſe who write for immortality.

But human works are not eaſily found without a periſhable part. Of the ancient poets every reader feels the mythology tedious and oppreſſive. Of Hudibras, the manners, being founded on opinions, are temporary and local, and therefore become every day leſs intelligible, and leſs ſtriking. What Cicero ſays of philoſophy is true likewiſe of wit and humour, that "time effaces the fictions of opinion, and confirms "the determinations of Nature." Such manners as depend upon ſtanding relations and general paſſions are co-extended with the race of man; but thoſe modifications of life, and peculiarities of practice, which are the progeny of error and perverſeneſs, or at beſt of ſome accidental influence or tranſient perſuaſion, muſt periſh with their parents.

Much

Much therefore of that humour which tranſported the laſt century with merriment is loſt to us, who do not know the ſour ſolemnity, the ſullen ſuperſtition, the gloomy moroſeneſs, and the ſtubborn ſcruples of the ancient Puritans; or, if we knew them, derive our information only from books, or from tradition, have never had them before our eyes, and cannot but by recollection and ſtudy underſtand the lines in which they are ſatyriſed. Our grandfathers knew the picture from the life; we judge of the life by contemplating the picture.

It is ſcarcely poſſible, in the regularity and compoſure of the preſent time, to image the tumult of abſurdity, and clamour of contradiction, which perplexed doctrine, diſordered practice, and diſturbed both publick and private quiet, in that age when ſubordination was broken, and awe was hiſſed away; when any unſettled innovator who could hatch a half-formed notion produced it to the publick; when every man might become a preacher, and almoſt every preacher could collect a congregation.

The wiſdom of the nation is very reaſonably ſuppoſed to reſide in the parliament. What can be concluded of the lower claſſes of the people, when in one of the parliaments ſummoned by Cromwell it was ſeriouſly propoſed, that all the records in the Tower ſhould be burnt, that all memory of things paſt ſhould be effaced, and that the whole ſyſtem of life ſhould commence anew?

We have never been witneſſes of animoſities excited by the uſe of mince pies and plumb porridge; nor ſeen with what abhorrence thoſe who could eat them at all other times of the year would ſhrink from them in December.

ember. An old Puritan, who was alive in my child-hood, being at one of the feaſts of the church invited by a neighbour to partake his cheer, told him, that, if he would treat him at an alehouſe with beer, brewed for all times and ſeaſons, he ſhould accept his kind-neſs, but would have none of his ſuperſtitious meats or drinks *.

One of the puritanical tenets was the illegality of all games of chance; and he that reads Gataker upon *Lots* may ſee how much learning and reaſon one of the firſt ſcholars of his age thought neceſſary, to prove that it was no crime to throw a dye, or play at cards, or to hide a ſhilling for the reckoning.

Aſtrology, however, againſt which ſo much of the ſatire is directed, was not more the folly of the Puritans than of others. It had in that time a very extenſive dominion. Its predictions raiſed hopes and fears in minds which ought to have rejected it with contempt. In hazardous undertakings care was taken to begin under the influence of a propitious planet; and when the king was priſoner in Cariſbrook Caſtle, an aſtrologer was conſulted what hour would be found moſt favourable to an eſcape.

What effect this poem had upon the publick, whether it ſhamed impoſture or reclaimed credulity, is not eaſily determined. Cheats can ſeldom ſtand long againſt laughter. It is certain that the credit of planetary intelligence wore faſt away; though ſome men of knowledge, and Dryden among them, continued to believe that conjunctions and oppoſitions had a great

* I have heard of a clergyman ejected from his living by the parliament viſiters for being a ſcandalous eater of cuſtard. Not that it was a ſuperſtitious meat, but becauſe it was a delicacy.

part

part in the diſtribution of good or evil, and in the g vernment of ſublunary things.

Poetical Action ought to be probable upon cert ſuppoſitions, and ſuch probability as burleſque r quires is here violated only by one incident. Nothi can ſhew more plainly the neceſſity of doing ſomethi and the difficulty of finding ſomething to do, th that Butler was reduced to transfer to his hero the f gellation of Sancho, not the moſt agreeable fiction Cervantes; very ſuitable indeed to the manners that age and nation, which aſcribed wonderful effic to voluntary penances; but ſo remote from the pr tice and opinions of the Hudibraſtick time, t judgement and imagination are alike offended.

The diction of this poem is groſſly familiar, and numbers purpoſely neglected, except in a few pla where the thoughts by their native excellence ſec themſelves from violation, being ſuch as mean l guage cannot expreſs *. The mode of verſification been blamed by Dryden, who regrets that the hero

* Of ſuch there are many in Hudibras, as alſo many pa abounding with the beauties of poetry that are ſeldom noticed: t for inſtance:

Where'er you tread, your feet ſhall ſet
The primroſe and the violet:
All ſpices, perfumes, and ſweet powders
Shall borrow from your breath their odours:
Nature her charter ſhall renew,
And take all lives of things from you:
The world depend upon your eye,
And when you frown upon it, die.

The moon pull'd off her veil of night
That hides her face by day from ſight,
Myſterious veil of darkneſs made
That's both her luſtre and her ſhade.

weal

meaſure was not rather choſen. To the critical ſentence of Dryden the higheſt reverence would be due, were not his deciſions often precipitate, and his opinions immature. When he wiſhed to change the meaſure, he probably would have been willing to change more. If he intended that, when the numbers were quick, the diction ſhould ſtill remain vulgar, he planned a very heterogeneous and unnatural compoſition. If he preferred a general ſtateline ſs both of ſound and words, he can be only underſtood to wiſh that Butler had undertaken a different work.

The meaſure is quick, ſpritely, and colloquial, ſuitable to the vulgarity of the words and the levity of the ſentiments. But ſuch numbers and ſuch diction can gain regard only when they are uſed by a writer whoſe vigour of fancy and copiouſneſs of knowledge intitle him to contempt of ornaments, and who, in confidence of the novelty and juſtneſs of his conceptions, can afford to throw metaphors and epithets away. To another that conveys common thoughts in careleſs verſification, it will only be ſaid, "Pauper videri "Cinna vult, & eſt pauper." The meaning and diction will be worthy of each other, and criticiſm may juſtly doom them to periſh together.

Nor even though another Butler ſhould ariſe, would another Hudibras obtain the ſame regard. Burleſque conſiſts in a diſproportion between the ſtyle and the ſentiments, or between the adventitious ſentiments and the fundamental ſubject. It therefore, like all bodies compounded of heterogeneous parts, contains in it a principle of corruption. All diſproportion is unnatural; and from what is unnatural we can derive only the pleaſure which novelty produces. *We admire it awhile* as a ſtrange thing; but when it is

no longer ſtrange, we perceive its deformity. It is a kind of artifice, which by frequent repetition detects itſelf; and the reader, learning in time what he is to expect, lays down his book, as the ſpectator turns away from a ſecond exhibition of thoſe tricks, of which the only uſe is to ſhew that they can be played *.

* Notwithſtanding this ſevere cenſure of Hudibras, it is the opinion of many that the various learning, the wit and humour, and that fine painting and diſcrimination of characters which the poem exhibits, have given it a permanent exiſtence, and of this the many editions it has gone through are a ſort of proof. It were to be wiſhed that an edition with fewer trifling notes and impertinent citations than that of Dr. Grey were given to the public, and that by an editor more ſuſceptible of its beauties than he ſeems to have been; of which defect in him I cannot but note the following as an egregious inſtance. Butler, meaning to ſhew that the uſurpers availed themſelves of thoſe laws which were made to ſecure the freedom of the people, illuſtrates his argument by this fine ſimile:

As when the ſea breaks o'er its bounds,
And overflows the level grounds,
Thoſe banks and dams, that like a ſcreen
Did keep it out, now keep it in:
So when tyrannic uſurpation
Invades the freedom of a nation,
The laws o' th' land that were intended
To keep it out, are made defend it.

Upon which paſſage Dr. Grey adverts to the old ſtory, as he calls it, of Godwin-ſands, which are the effect of a ſuppoſed irruption of the ſea through banks that ever ſince the accident, as being deſtroyed, could neither keep it in nor out.

With equal inattention or incapacity to diſcern the humour of the poem, he compares with the following lines,

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

With that he ſerved upon his blade;
And Ralpho too, as quick and bold,
Upon his baſket hilt laid hold,
With equal readineſs prepar'd
To draw and ſtand upon his guard,

theſe

ſe in the conteſt betwixt Brutus and Caſſius in Shakſpeare's Julius Car, Act IV.

Caſſ. O Gods! ye Gods! muſt I endure all this?
Brutus. All this! ay more: fret till your proud heart break;
Go ſhew your ſlaves how choleric you are,
And make your bondſmen tremble: Muſt I budge?
Muſt I obſerve you? muſt I ſtand and crouch
Under your teſty humour? By the Gods,
You ſhall digeſt the venom of your ſpleen,
Tho' it do ſplit you: for, from this day forth,
I'll uſe you for my mirth, yea, for my laughter,
When you are waſpiſh.———

*** The portraits of Butler, particularly that after Soeſt prefixed Dr. Grey's edition of the Hudibras, repreſent him as a man of a ble aſpect, and admit not a doubt that they are genuine; but in edition thereof in 12mo, 1726, with cuts, deſigned and etched Hogarth, is a head of him, an exact copy of a mezzotinto of ptiſt the flower painter, ſcraped by Smith or White, but I think t latter, which gives him the countenance of a Saracen.

ROCHESTER.

JOHN WILMOT, afterwards Earl of Rocheſter, the ſon of Henry Earl of Rocheſter, better known by the title of Lord Wilmot, ſo often mentioned in Clarendon's Hiſtory, was born April 10, 1647, at Ditchley in Oxfordſhire. After a grammatical education at the ſchool of Burford, he entered a nobleman into Wadham College in 1659, only twelve years old; and in 1661, at fourteen, was, with ſome other perſons of high rank, made maſter of arts by Lord Clarendon in perſon.

He travelled afterwards into France and Italy; and, at his return, devoted himſelf to the Court. In 1665 he went to ſea with Sandwich, and diſtinguiſhed himſelf at Bergen by uncommon intrepidity; and the next ſummer ſerved again on board Sir Edward Spragge, who, in the heat of the engagement, having a meſſage of reproof to ſend to one of his captains, could find no man ready to carry it but Wilmot, who, in a[illegible]en , went and returned amidſt the ſtorm of ſhot.

But his reputation for bravery was not lasting: he was reproached with ſlinking away in ſtreet quarrels, and leaving his companions to ſhift as they could without him; and Sheffield Duke of Buckingham has left a ſtory of his refuſal to fight him.

He had very early an inclination to intemperance, which he totally ſubdued in his travels; but, when he became a courtier, he unhappily addicted himſelf to diſſolute and vitious company, by which his principles were corrupted, and his manners depraved. He loſt all ſenſe of religious reſtraint; and, finding it not convenient to admit the authority of laws which he was reſolved not to obey, ſheltered his wickedneſs behind infidelity.

As he excelled in that noiſy and licentious merriment which wine incites, his companions eagerly encouraged him in exceſs, and he willingly indulged it; till, as he confeſſed to Dr. Burnet, he was for five years together continually drunk, or ſo much inflamed by frequent ebriety, as in no interval to be maſter of himſelf.

In this ſtate he played many frolicks, which it is not for his honour that we ſhould remember, and which are not now diſtinctly known. He often purſued low amours in mean diſguiſes, and always acted with great exactneſs and dexterity the characters which he aſſumed.

He once erected a ſtage on Tower-hill, and harangued the populace as a mountebank; and, having made phyſick part of his ſtudy, is ſaid to have practiſed it ſucceſsfully.

He was ſo much in favour with King Charles, that he was made one of the gentlemen of the bedchamber, and comptroller of Woodſtock Park.

Having an active and inquiſitive mind, he never, except in his paroxyſms of intemperance, was wholly negligent of ſtudy: he read what is conſidered as polite learning ſo much, that he is mentioned by Wood as the greateſt ſcholar of all the nobility. Sometimes he retired into the country, and amuſed himſelf with writing libels, in which he did not pretend to confine himſelf to truth.

His favourite author in French was Boileau, and in Engliſh Cowley.

Thus in a courſe of drunken gaiety, and groſs ſenſuality, with intervals of ſtudy perhaps yet more criminal, with an avowed contempt of all decency and order, a total diſregard to every moral, and a reſolute denial of every religious obligation, he lived worthleſs and uſeleſs, and blazed out his youth and his health in laviſh voluptuouſneſs; till, at the age of one and thirty, he had exhauſted the fund of life, and reduced himſelf to a ſtate of weakneſs and decay.

At this time he was led to an acquaintance with Dr. Burnet, to whom he laid open with great freedom the tenour of his opinions, and the courſe of his life, and from whom he received ſuch conviction of the reaſonableneſs of moral duty, and the truth of Chriſtianity, as produced a total change both of his manners and opinions. The account of thoſe ſalutary conferences is given by by Burnet, in a book intituled, *Some Paſſages of the Life and Death of* John *Earl of* Rocheſter; which the critick ought to read for its elegance, the philoſopher for its arguments, and the ſaint for its piety. It were an injury to the reader to offer him an abridgement.

He died July 26, 1680, before he had completed his thirty-fourth year; and was ſo worn away by a long illneſs, that life went out without a ſtruggle.

Lord

Lord Rocheſter was eminent for the vigour of his colloquial wit, and remarkable for many wild pranks and ſallies of extravagance. The glare of his general character diffuſed itſelf upon his writings; the compoſitions of a man whoſe name was heard ſo often were certain of attention, and from many readers certain of applauſe. This blaze of reputation is not yet quite extinguiſhed; and his poetry ſtill retains ſome ſplendour beyond that which genius has beſtowed.

Wood and Burnet give us reaſon to believe, that much was imputed to him which he did not write. I know not by whom the original collection was made, or by what authority its genuineneſs was aſcertained. The firſt edition was publiſhed in the year of his death, with an air of concealment, profeſſing in the title page to be printed at *Antwerp*.

Of ſome of the pieces, however, there is no doubt. The Imitation of Horace's Satire, the Verſes to Lord Mulgrave, the Satire againſt Man, the Verſes upon *Nothing*, and perhaps ſome others, are I believe genuine, and perhaps moſt of thoſe which the late collection exhibits.

As he cannot be ſuppoſed to have found leiſure for any courſe of continued ſtudy, his pieces are commonly ſhort, ſuch as one fit of reſolution would produce.

His ſongs have no particular character: they tell, like other ſongs, in ſmooth and eaſy language, of ſcorn and kindneſs, diſmiſſion and deſertion, abſence and inconſtancy, with the common places of artificial courtſhip. They are commonly ſmooth and eaſy; but have little nature, and little ſentiment.

His imitation of Horace on Lucilius is not inelegant or unhappy. In the reign of Charles the Second be-

gan that adapation, which has ſince been very frequent, of ancient poetry to preſent times; and perhaps few will be found where the paralleliſm is better preſerved than in this. The verſification is indeed ſometimes careleſs, but it is ſometimes vigorous and weighty.

The ſtrongeſt effort of his Muſe is his poem upon *Nothing*. He is not the firſt who has choſen this barren topick for the boaſt of his fertility. There is a poem called *Nihil* in Latin by *Paſſerat*, a poet and critick of the ſixteenth century in France; who, in his own epitaph, expreſſes his zeal for good poetry thus:

—Molliter oſſa quieſcent
Sint modo carminibus non onerata malis.

His works are not common, and therefore I ſhall ſubjoin his verſes.

In examining this performance, *Nothing* muſt be conſidered as having not only a negative but a kind of poſitive ſignification; as I need not fear thieves, I have *nothing*; and *nothing* is a very powerful protector. In the firſt part of the ſentence it is taken negatively; in the ſecond it is taken poſitively, as an agent. In one of Boileau's lines it was a queſtion, whether he ſhould uſe *à rien faire*, or *à ne rien faire*; and the firſt was preferred, becauſe it gave *rien* a ſenſe in ſome ſort poſitive. *Nothing* can be a ſubject only in its poſitive ſenſe, and ſuch a ſenſe is given it in the firſt line:

Nothing, thou elder brother ev'n to ſhade.

In this line, I know not whether he does not allude to a curious book *de Umbra*, by Wowerus, which, having told the qualities of *Shade*, concludes with a poem in which are theſe lines:

Jam primum terram validis circumſpice clauſtris
Suſpenſam totam, decus admirabile mundi
Terraſque tractuſque maris, campoſque liquentes
Aeris & vaſti laqueata palatia cœli—
Omnibus UMBRA prior.

The poſitive ſenſe is generally preſerved, with great ſkill, through the whole poem; though ſometimes, in a ſubordinate ſenſe, the negative *nothing* is injudiciouſly mingled. Paſſerat confounds the two ſenſes.

Another of his moſt vigorous pieces is his Lampoon on Sir Car Scroop, who, in a poem called *The Praiſe of Satire*, had ſome lines like theſe *:

He who can puſh into a midnight fray
His brave companion, and then run away,
Leaving him to be murder'd in the ſtreet,
Then put it off with ſome buffoon conceit;
Him, thus diſhonour'd, for a wit you own,
And court him as top fidler of the town.

This was meant of Rocheſter, whoſe *buffoon conceit* was, I ſuppoſe, a ſaying often mentioned, that *every Man would be a Coward if he durſt*; and drew from him thoſe furious verſes; to which Scroop made in reply an epigram, ending with theſe lines:

Thou canſt hurt no man's fame with thy ill word;
Thy pen is full as harmleſs as thy ſword.

Of the ſatire againſt *Man*, Rocheſter can only claim what remains when all Boileau's part is taken away.

In all his works there is ſprightlineſs and vigour, and every where may be found tokens of a mind which ſtudy might have carried to excellence. What more can be expected from a life ſpent in oſtentatious contempt of regularity, and ended before the abilities of many other men began to be diſplayed?

* *I quote from memory.* Orig. Edit.

Poems.

Poema Cl. V. Joannis Passeratii,

Regii in Academia Pariſienſi Profeſſoris,

Ad ornatiſſimum virum Erricum Memmium.

Janus adeſt, feſtæ poſcunt ſua dona Kalendæ,
Munus abeſt feſtis quod poſſim offerre Kalendis.
Siccine Caſtalius nobis exaruit humor?
Uſque adeò ingenii noſtri eſt exhauſta facultas,
Immunem ut videat redeuntis janitor anni?
Quod nuſquam eſt, potius nova per veſtigia quæram.
Ecce autem partes dum ſeſe verſat in omnes
Invenit mea Muſa NIHIL, ne deſpice munus.
Nam NIHIL eſt gemmis, NIHIL eſt pretioſius auro.
Huc animum, huc igitur vultus adverte benignos;
Res nova narratur quæ nulli audita priorum,
Auſonii & Graii dixerunt cætera vates,
Auſoniæ indictum NIHIL eſt Græcæque Camœnæ.
E cœlo quacunque Ceres ſua proſpicit arva,
Aut genitor liquidis orbem complectitur ulnis
Oceanus, NIHIL interitus & originis expers.
Immortale NIHIL, NIHIL omni parte beatum.
Quod ſi hinc majeſtas & vis divina probatur,
Num quid honore deûm, num quid dignabimur aris?
Conſpectu lucis NIHIL eſt jucundius almæ,
Vere NIHIL, NIHIL irriguo formoſius horto,
Floridius pratis, Zephyri clementius aura;
In bello ſanctum NIHIL eſt, Martiſque tumultu:
Juſtum in pace NIHIL, NIHIL eſt in fœdere tutum.
Felix cui NIHIL eſt, (fuerant hæc vota Tibullo)
Non timet inſidias: fures, incendia temnit:
Sollicitas ſequitur nullo ſub judice lites.
Ille ipſe invictis qui ſubjicit omnia fatis
Zenonis ſapiens, NIHIL admiratur & optat.
Socratici que g egis fuit iſta ſcientia quondam,
Scire NIHIL, ſtudio cui nunc incumbitur uni.
Nec quicquam in ludo mavult didiciſſe juventus,

Ad magnas quia ducit opes, & culmen honorum.
Nosce NIHIL, nosces fertur quod Pythagoreæ
Grano hærere fabæ, cui vox adjuncta negantis.
Multi Mercurio freti duce viscera terræ
Pura liquefaciunt simul, & patrimonia miscent,
Arcano instantes operi, & carbonibus atris,
Qui tandem exhausti damnis, fractique labore,
Inveniunt atque inventum NIHIL usque requirunt.
Hoc dimetiri non ulla decempeda possit:
Nec numeret Libycæ numerum qui callet arenæ:
Et Phœbo ignotum NIHIL est, NIHIL altius astris.
Túque, tibi licet eximium sit mentis acumen,
Omnem in naturam penetrans, & in abdita rerum,
Pace tua, Memmi, NIHIL ignorare vidêris.
Sole tamen NIHIL est, & puro clarius igne.
Tange NIHIL, dicesque NIHIL sine corpore tangi.
Cerne NIHIL, cerni dices NIHIL absque colore.
Surdum audit loquitúrque NIHIL sine voce, volátque
Absque ope pennarum, & graditur sine cruribus ullis.
Absque loco motuque NIHIL per inane vagatur.
Humano generi utilius NIHIL arte medendi.
Ne rhombos igitur, neu Thessala murmura tentet
Idalia vacuum trajectus arundine pectus,
Neu legat Idæo Dictæum in vertice gramen.
Vulneribus sævi NIHIL auxiliatur amoris.
Vexerit & quemvis trans mœstas portitor undas,
Ad superos imo NIHIL hunc revocabit ab orco.
Inferni NIHIL inflectit præcordia regis,
Parcarúmque colos, & inexorabile pensum.
Obruta Phlegræis campis Titania pubes
Fulmineo sensit NIHIL esse potentius ictu:
Porrigitur magni NIHIL extra mœnia mundi:
Diíque NIHIL metuunt. Quid longo carmine plura
Commemorem? virtute NIHIL præstantius ipsa,
Splendidius NIHIL est; NIHIL est Jove denique majus.
Sed tempus finem argutis imponere nugis:
Ne tibi si multa laudem mea carmina charta,
De NIHILO NIHILI pariant fastidia versus.

*** The particulars of so no s f the Earl of Rocheſter, were it not l e at the cloſe of it, had perhaps better have been fi red to into oblivion than recorded. Nevertheleſs, it is ſaid that s were elegant, and that they are truly repreſented in the p of Dorimant, a character in Sir George Etherege's comedy of n of Mode, drawn with exquiſite art and from the life. T. t. 1843, in not.

ROSCOMMON.

WENTWORTH DILLON, Earl of Roſcommon, was the ſon of James Dillon and Elizabeth Wentworth, ſiſter to the earl of Strafford. He was born in Ireland, during the lieutenancy of Strafford, who, being both his uncle and his godfather, gave him his own ſurname. His father, the third earl of Roſcommon, had been converted by Uſher to the proteſtant religion; and when the popiſh rebellion broke out, Strafford thinking the family in great danger from the fury of the Iriſh, ſent for his godſon, and placed him at his own ſeat in Yorkſhire, where he was inſtructed in Latin; which he learned ſo as to write it with purity and elegance, though he was never able to retain the rules of grammar.

Such is the account given by Mr. *Fenton*, from whoſe notes on Waller moſt of this account muſt be borrowed, though I know not whether all that he relates is certain. The inſtructor whom he aſſigns to Roſcommon is one Dr. *Hall*, by whom he cannot mean the famous *Hall*, then an old man and a biſhop.

When

When the ſtorm broke out upon Strafford, his houſe was a ſhelter no longer; and Dillon, by the advice of Uſher, was ſent to *Caen*, where the Proteſtants had then an univerſity, and continued his ſtudies under *Bochart*.

Young Dillon, who was ſent to ſtudy under Bochart, and who is repreſented as having already made great proficiency in literature, could not be more than nine years old. Strafford went to govern Ireland in 1633, and was put to death eight years afterwards. That he was ſent to Caen, is certain; that he was a great ſcholar, may be doubted.

At Caen he is ſaid to have had ſome preternatural intelligence of his father's death.

"The lord Roſcommon, being a boy of ten years "of age, at Caen in Normandy, one day was, as it "were, madly extravagant in playing, leaping, get-"ting over the tables, boards, &c. He was wont to "be ſober enough; they ſaid, God grant this bodes "no ill-luck to him! In the heat of this extravagant "fit, he cries out, *My father is dead.* A fortnight "after, news came from Ireland that his father was "dead. This account I had from Mr. Knolles, who "was his governor, and then with him,—ſince ſecre-"tary to the earl of Strafford; and I have heard his "lordſhip's relations confirm the ſame." *Aubrey's Miſcellany.*

The preſent age is very little inclined to favour any accounts of this kind, nor will the name of Aubrey much recommend it to credit: it ought not, however, to be omitted, becauſe better evidence of a fact cannot eaſily be found than is here offered, and it muſt be by preſerving ſuch relations that we may at laſt judge how much they are to be regarded. If we ſtay to examine this

this account, we ſhall ſee difficulties on both ſides; here is a relation of a fact given by a man who had no intereſt to deceive, and who could not be deceived himſelf; and here is, on the other hand, a miracle which produces no effect; the order of nature is interrupted, to diſcover not a future but only a diſtant event, the knowledge of which is of no uſe to him to whom it is revealed. Between theſe difficulties, what way ſhall be found? Is reaſon or teſtimony to be rejected? I believe what Oſborne ſays of an appearance of ſanctity may be applied to ſuch impulſes or anticipations as this: *Do not wholly ſlight them, becauſe they may be true: but do not eaſily truſt them, becauſe they may be falſe.*

The ſtate both of England and Ireland was at this time ſuch, that he who was abſent from either country had very little temptation to return: and therefore Roſcommon, when he left Caen, travelled into Italy, and amuſed himſelf with its antiquities, and particularly with medals, in which he acquired uncommon ſkill.

At the Reſtoration, with the other friends of monarchy, he came to England, was made captain of the band of penſioners, and learned ſo much of the diſſoluteneſs of the court, that he addicted himſelf immoderately to gaming, by which he was engaged in frequent quarrels, and which undoubtedly brought upon him its uſual concomitants, extravagance and diſtreſs.

After ſome time a diſpute about part of his eſtate forced him into Ireland, where he was made by the duke of Ormond captain of the guards, and met with an adventure thus related by *Fenton*.

"He was at Dublin as much as ever diſtempered "with the ſame fatal affection for play, which engaged

"him

" him in one adventure that well deſerves to be related. " As he returned to his lodgings from a gaming-table, " he was attacked in the dark by three ruffians, who " were employed to aſſaſſinate him. The Earl defend- " ed himſelf with ſo much reſolution, that he diſ- " patched one of the aggreſſors; whilſt a gentleman, " accidentally paſſing that way, interpoſed, and diſ- " armed another: the third ſecured himſelf by flight. " This generous aſſiſtant was a diſbanded officer, of a " good family and fair reputation; who, by what we " call the partiality of fortune, to avoid cenſuring the " iniquities of the times, wanted even a plain ſuit of " cloaths to make a decent appearance at the caſtle. " But his lordſhip, on this occaſion, preſenting him to " the Duke of Ormond, with great importunity prevail- " ed with his grace, that he might reſign his poſt of " captain of the guards to his friend; which for about " three years the gentleman enjoyed, and, upon his " death, the duke returned the commiſſion to his ge- " nerous benefactor."

When he had finiſhed his buſineſs, he returned to London; was made Maſter of the Horſe to the Dutcheſs of York; and married the Lady Frances, daughter of the Earl of Burlington, and widow of Colonel Courteney.

He now buſied his mind with literary projects, and formed the plan of a ſociety for refining our language, and fixing its ſtandard; *in imitation* ſays, Fenton, *of thoſe learned and polite ſocieties with which he had been acquainted abroad.* In this deſign his friend Dryden is ſaid to have aſſiſted him.

The ſame deſign, it is well known, was revived by Dr. Swift in the miniſtry of Oxford; but it has never ſince been publickly mentioned, though at that time

great

great expectations were formed by ſome of its eſtabliſhment and its effects. Such a ſociety might, perhaps, without much difficulty, be collected; but that it would produce what is expected from it, may be doubted.

The Italian academy ſeems to have obtained its end. The language was refined, and ſo fixed that it has changed but little. The French academy thought that they refined their language, and doubtleſs thought rightly; but the event has not ſhewn that they fixed it; for the French of the preſent time is very different from that of the laſt century.

In this country an academy could be expected to do but little. If an academician's place were profitable, it would be given by intereſt; if attendance were gratuitous, it would be rarely paid, and no man would endure the leaſt diſguſt. Unanimity is impoſſible, and debate would ſeparate the aſſembly.

But ſuppoſe the philological decree made and promulgated, what would be its authority? In abſolute governments, there is ſometimes a general reverence paid to all that has the ſanction of power, and the countenance of greatneſs. How little this is the ſtate of our country needs not to be told. We live in an age in which it is a kind of publick ſport to refuſe all reſpect that cannot be enforced. The edicts of an Engliſh academy would probably be read by many, only that they might be ſure to diſobey them.

That our language is in perpetual danger of corruption cannot be denied; but what prevention can be found? The preſent manners of the nation would deride authority, and therefore nothing is left but that every writer ſhould criticiſe himſelf.

All hopes of new literary inſtitutions were quickly ſuppreſſed by the contentious turbulence of King James's reign; and Roſcommon, foreſeeing that ſome violent concuſſion of the State was at hand, purpoſed to retire to Rome, alleging, that *it was beſt to ſit near the chimney when the chamber ſmoaked*; a ſentence, of which the application ſeems not very clear.

His departure was delayed by the gout; and he was ſo impatient either of hinderance or of pain, that he ſubmitted himſelf to a French empirick, who is ſaid to have repelled the diſeaſe into his bowels.

At the moment in which he expired, he uttered, with an energy of voice that expreſſed the moſt fervent devotion, two lines of his own verſion of *Dies iræ*:

> My God, my Father, and my Friend,
> Do not forſake me in my end.

He died in 1684; and was buried with great pomp in Weſtminſter-Abbey.

His poetical character is given by Mr. Fenton:

"In his writings," ſays Fenton, "we view the image "of a mind which was naturally ſerious and ſolid; "richly furniſhed and adorned with all the ornaments "of learning, unaffectedly diſpoſed in the moſt regular "and elegant order. His imagination might have "probably been more fruitful and ſprightly, if his "judgement had been leſs ſevere. But that ſeverity "(delivered in a maſculine, clear, ſuccinct ſtyle) con- "tributed to make him ſo eminent in the didactical "manner, that no man, with juſtice, can affirm he "was ever equalled by any of our nation, without con- "feſſing at the ſame time that he is inferior to none. "In ſome other kinds of writing his genius ſeems to "have wanted fire to attain the point of perfection; "but who can attain it?"

From

From this account of the riches of his mind, who would not imagine that they had been diſplayed in large volumes and numerous performances? Who would not, after the peruſal of this character, be ſurpriſed to find that all the proofs of this genius, and knowledge and judgement, are not ſufficient to form a ſingle book, or to appear otherwiſe than in conjunction with the works of ſome other writer of the ſame petty ſize *? But thus it is that characters are written: we know ſomewhat, and we imagine the reſt. The obſervation, that his imagination would probably have been more fruitful and ſprightly if his judgement had been leſs ſevere, may be anſwered, by a remarker ſomewhat inclined to cavil, by a contrary ſuppoſition, that his judgement would probably have been leſs ſevere, if his imagination had been more fruitful. It is ridiculous to oppoſe judgement to imagination; for it does not appear that men have neceſſarily leſs of one as they have more of the other.

We muſt allow of Roſcommon, what Fenton has not mentioned ſo diſtinctly as he ought, and what is yet very much to his honour, that he is perhaps the only correct writer in verſe before Addiſon; and that, if there are not ſo many or ſo great beauties in his compoſitions as in thoſe of ſome contemporaries, there are at leaſt fewer faults. Nor is this his higheſt praiſe;

* They were publiſhed together with thoſe of Duke, in an octavo volume, in 1717. The editor, whoever he was, profeſſes to have taken great care to procure and inſert all of his lordſhip's poems that are truly genuine. The truth of this aſſertion is flatly denied by the author of an account of Mr. John Pomfret, prefixed to his Remains; who aſſerts, that the Proſpect of Death was written by that perſon many years after lord Roſcommon's deceaſe; as alſo, that the paraphraſe of the Prayer of Jeremy was written by a gentleman of the name of Southcot, living in the year 1724.

for Mr. Pope has celebrated him as the only moral writer of King Charles's reign:

> Unhappy Dryden! in all Charles's days,
> Roſcommon only boaſts unſpotted lays.

His great work is his Eſſay on Tranſlated Verſe; of which Dryden writes thus in the preface to his Miſcellanies:

"It was my Lord Roſcommon's Eſſay on Tranſlated "Verſe," ſays Dryden, "which made me uneaſy, till "I tried whether or no I was capable of following his "rules, and of reducing the ſpeculation into practice. "For many a fair precept in poetry is like a ſeeming "demonſtration in mathematicks, very ſpecious in the "diagram, but failing in the mechanick operation. I "think I have generally obſerved his inſtructions: I "am ſure my reaſon is ſufficiently convinced both of "their truth and uſefulneſs; which, in other words, "is to confeſs no leſs a vanity than to pretend that I "have, at leaſt in ſome places, made examples to his "rules."

This declaration of Dryden will, I am afraid, be found little more than one of thoſe curſory civilities which one author pays to another; for when the ſum of lord Roſcommon's precepts is collected, it will not be eaſy to diſcover how they can qualify their reader for a better performance of tranſlation than might have been attained by his own reflections.

He that can abſtract his mind from the elegance of the poetry, and confine it to the ſenſe of the precepts, will find no other direction than that the author ſhould be ſuitable to the tranſlator's genius; that he ſhould be ſuch as may deſerve a tranſlation; that he who intends to tranſlate him ſhould endeavour to underſtand him; that

that perſpicuity ſhould be ſtudied, and unuſual and uncouth names ſparingly inſerted; and that the ſtyle of the original ſhould be copied in its elevation and depreſſion. Theſe are the rules that are celebrated as ſo definite and important; and for the delivery of which to mankind ſo much honour has been paid. Roſcommon has indeed deſerved his praiſes, had they been given with diſcernment, and beſtowed not on the rules themſelves, but the art with which they are introduced, and the decorations with which they are adorned.

The Eſſay, though generally excellent, is not without its faults. The ſtory of the Quack, borrowed from Boileau, was not worth the importation: he has confounded the Britiſh and Saxon mythology:

> I grant that from ſome moſſy idol oak,
> In double rhymes, our *Thor* and *Woden* ſpoke.

The oak, as I think Gildon has obſerved, belonged to the Britiſh druids, and *Thor* and *Woden* were Saxon deities. Of the *double rhymes*, which he ſo liberally ſuppoſes, he certainly had no knowledge.

His interpoſition of a long paragraph of blank verſes is unwarrantably licentious. Latin poets might as well have introduced a ſeries of iambicks among their heroicks.

His next work is the tranſlation of the Art of poetry; which has received, in my opinion, not leſs praiſe than it deſerves. Blank verſe, left merely to its numbers, has little operation either on the ear or mind: it can hardly ſupport itſelf without bold figures and ſtriking images. A poem frigidly didactick, without rhyme, is ſo near to proſe, that the reader only ſcorns it for pretending to be verſe.

Having diſentangled himſelf from the difficulties of rhyme, he may juſtly be expected to give the ſenſe of Horace with great exactneſs, and to ſuppreſs no ſubtilty of ſentiment for the difficulty of expreſſing it. This demand, however, his tranſlation will not ſatisfy; what he found obſcure, I do not know that he has ever cleared.

Among his ſmaller works, the Eclogue of Virgil and the *Dies Iræ* are well tranſlated; though the beſt line in the *Dies Iræ* is borrowed from Dryden. In return, ſucceeding poets have borrowed from Roſcommon.

In the verſes on the Lap-dog, the pronouns *thou* and *you* are offenſively confounded; and the turn at the end is from Waller.

His verſions of the two odes of Horace are made with great liberty, which is not recompenſed by much elegance or vigour.

His political verſes are ſpritely, and when they were written muſt have been very popular.

Of the ſcene of *Guarini*, and the prologue to *Pompey*, Mrs. Phillips, in her letters to Sir Charles Cotterel, has given the hiſtory.

"Lord Roſcommon," ſays ſhe, "is certainly one "of the moſt promiſing young noblemen in Ireland. "He has paraphraſed a Pſalm admirably, and a ſcene "of *Paſtor Fido* very finely, in ſome places much better "than Sir Richard Fanſhaw. This was undertaken "merely in compliment to me, who happened to ſay "that it was the beſt ſcene in Italian, and the worſt "in Engliſh. He was only two hours about it. It "begins thus:

"Dear happy groves, and you the dark retreat
"Of ſilent horrour, Reaſon's eternal ſeat."

From

From theſe lines, which are ſince ſomewhat mended, it appears that he did not think a work of two hours fit to endure the eye of criticiſm without reviſal.

When Mrs. Phillips was in Ireland, ſome ladies, that had ſeen her tranſlation of Pompey, reſolved to bring it on the ſtage at Dublin; and, to promote their deſign, Lord Roſcommon gave them a prologue, and Sir Edward Dering an Epilogue; "which," ſays ſhe, "are the beſt performances of thoſe kinds I ever ſaw." If this is not criticiſm, it is at leaſt gratitude. The thought of bringing Cæſar and Pompey into Ireland, the only country over which Cæſar never had any power, is lucky.

Of Roſcommon's works, the judgement of the publick ſeems to be right. He is elegant, but not great; he never labours after exquiſite beauties, and he ſeldom falls into groſs faults. His verſification is ſmooth, but rarely vigorous, and his rhymes are remarkably exact. He improved taſte, if he did not enlarge knowledge, and may be numbered among the benefactors to Engliſh literature.

OTWAY.

OF THOMAS OTWAY, one of the firſt names in the Engliſh drama, little is known; nor is there any part of that little which his biographer can take pleaſure in relating.

He was born at Trottin in Suſſex, March 3, 1651, the ſon of Mr. Humphry Otway, rector of *Woolbeding*. From Wincheſter-ſchool, where he was educated, he was entered, in 1669, a commoner of Chriſt-church; but left the univerſity without a degree, whether for want of money, or from impatience of academical reſtraint, or mere eagerneſs to mingle with the world, is not known.

It ſeems likely that he was in hope of being buſy and conſpicuous: for he went to London, and commenced player; but found himſelf unable to gain any reputation on the ſtage.

This kind of inability he ſhared with Shakſpeare and Jonſon, as he ſhared likewiſe ſome of their excellences.

It ſeems reaſonable to expect that a great
tick poet ſhould without difficulty become a great
that he who can feel, could expreſs; that he
an excite paſſion, ſhould exhibit with great rea-
its external modes: but ſince experience has
roved that of thoſe powers, whatever be their
, one may be poſſeſſed in a great degree by him
as very little of the other; it muſt be allowed
ey depend upon different faculties, or on diffe-
ſe of the ſame faculty; that the actor muſt have
cy of mien, a flexibility of countenance, and a
of tones, which the poet may be eaſily ſup-
to want; or that the attention of the poet and
layer have been differently employed; the one
en conſidering thought, and the other action;
s watched the heart, and the other contemplated
ce.

ough he could not gain much notice as a player,
: in himſelf ſuch powers as might qualify for a
tick author; and, in 1675, his twenty-fifth year,
ced *Alcibiades*, a tragedy; whether from the *Al-*
of *Palaprat*, I have not means to enquire.
ain, the great detector of plagiariſm, is

1677 he publiſhed *Titus and Berenice*, tranſlated
Rapin, with the *Cheats of Scapin* from Moliere;
1678 *Friendſhip in Faſhion*, a comedy, which,
ver might be its firſt reception, was, upon its
l at Drury-lane in 1749, hiſſed off the ſtage for
rality and obſcenity.

nt of morals, or of decency, did not in thoſe
xclude any man from the company of the wealthy
e gay, if he brought with him any powers of

enter-

entertainment; and Otway is ſaid to have been at this time a favourite companion of the diſſolute wits. But as he who deſires no virtue in his companion has no virtue in himſelf, thoſe whom Otway frequented had no purpoſe of doing more for him than to pay his reckoning. They deſired only to drink and laugh; their fondneſs was without benevolence, and their familiarity without friendſhip. Men of wit, ſays one of Otway's biographers, received at that time no favour from the Great but to ſhare their riots; *from which they were diſmiſſed again to their own narrow circumſtances. Thus they languiſhed in poverty without the ſupport of eminence.*

Some exception, however, muſt be made. The Earl of Plymouth, one of King Charles's natural ſons, procured for him a cornet's commiſſion in ſome troops then ſent into Flanders. But Otway did not proſper in his military character; for he ſoon left his commiſſion behind him, whatever was the reaſon, and came back to London in extreme indigence; which Rocheſter mentions with mercileſs inſolence in the *Seſſion of the Poets*:

> Tom Otway came next, Tom Shadwell's dear zany,
> And ſwears for heroicks he writes beſt of any;
> Don Carlos his pockets ſo amply had fill'd,
> That his mange was quite cured, and his lice were all kill'd.
> But Apollo had ſeen his face on the ſtage,
> And prudently did not think fit to engage
> The fourteenth a play-houſe, for the prop of an age.

Don Carlos, from which he is repreſented as having received ſo much benefit, was played in 1675. It appears, by the Lampoon, to have had great ſucceſs, and

is

is ſaid to have been played thirty nights together. This however it is reaſonable to doubt, as ſo long a continuance of one play upon the ſtage is a vey wide deviation from the practice of that time; when the ardour for theatrical entertainments was not yet diffuſed through the whole people, and the audience, conſiſting nearly of the ſame perſons, could be drawn together only by variety.

The *Orphan* was exhibited in 1680. This is one of the few plays that keep poſſeſſion of the ſtage, and has pleaſed for almoſt a century, through all the viciſſitudes of dramatick faſhion. Of this play nothing new can eaſily be ſaid. It is a domeſtick tragedy drawn from middle life. Its whole power is upon the affections; for it is not written with much comprehenſion of thought, or elegance of expreſſion. But if the heart is intereſted, many other beauties may be wanting, yet not be miſſed.

The ſame year produced *The Hiſtory and Fall of Caius Marius*; much of which is borrowed from the *Romeo and Juliet* of Shakſpeare.

In 1683 was publiſhed the firſt, and next year the ſecond, parts of *The Soldier's Fortune*, two comedies now forgotten: and in 1685 his laſt and greateſt dramatick work, *Venice preſerved*, a tragedy, which ſtill continues to be one of the favourites of the publick, notwithſtanding the want of morality in the original deſign, and the deſpicable ſcenes of vile comedy with which he has diverſified his tragick action *. By comparing

* The want of morality may be juſtly objected to almoſt the whole of Otway's writings. In the tragedy of the Orphan, in which the diſtreſs ariſes ſolely from a vicious action of a young man, is this moſt impious exclamation:

comparing this with his *Orphan*, it will appear that his images were by time become ſtronger, and his language more energetick. The ſtriking paſſages are in every mouth; and the publick ſeems to judge rightly of the faults and excellences of this play, that it is the work of a man not attentive to decency, nor zealous for virtue; but of one who conceived forcibly, and drew originally, by conſulting nature in his own breaſt.

Together with thoſe plays he wrote the poems which are in the late collection, and tranſlated from the French the *Hiſtory of the Triumvirate*.

All this was performed before he was thirty-four years old; for he died April 14, 1685, in a manner which I am unwilling to mention. Having been compelled by his neceſſities to contract debts, and hunted, as is ſuppoſed, by the terriers of the law, he retired to a publick houſe on Tower-hill, where he is ſaid to have died of want; or, as it is related by one of his biographers, by ſwallowing, after a long faſt, a piece of bread which charity had ſupplied. He went out, as is reported, almoſt naked, in the rage of hunger, and finding a gentleman in a neighbouring coffee-houſe, aſked him for a ſhilling. The gentleman gave him a guinea; and Otway going away bought a roll, and was choaked with the firſt mouthful. All this, I hope, is not true; and there is this ground of better hope, that

'Tis thus that Heaven its empire does maintain,
It may afflict but man muſt not complain.

How different from that, in Shakeſpear's Lear, of Edgar, whoſe baſtard brother Edmund had been a ceſſary to their father Glouceſter's miſeries!

The gods are juſt, and of our pleaſant vices
Make inſtruments to ſcourge us.

ope, who lived near enough to be well informed, re-
tes in Spence's memorials, that he died of a fever
ught by violent purſuit of a thief that had robbed
e of his friends. But that indigence, and its conco-
itants, ſorrow and deſpondency, preſſed hard upon
m, has never been denied, whatever immediate cauſe
ight bring him to the grave.

Of the poems which the late collection admits, the
ngeſt is the *Poet's Complaint of his Muſe*, part of
ich I do not underſtand; and in that which is leſs
ſcure I find little to commend. The language is
ten groſs, and the numbers are harſh. Otway had
t much cultivated verſification, nor much repleniſhed
s mind with general knowledge. His principal
wer was in moving the paſſions, to which Dryden *
his latter years left an illuſtrious teſtimony. He ap-
ars by ſome of his verſes to have been a zealous
yaliſt: and had what was in thoſe times the common
ward of loyalty; he lived and died neglected.

* In his preface to Freſnoy's *Art of Painting*. Orig. Edit.

WALLER.

WALLER.

EDMUND WALLER was born on the third of March, 1605, at Colſhill in Hertfordſhire. His father was Robert Waller, Eſquire, of Agmondeſham in Buckinghamſhire, whoſe family was originally a branch of the Kentiſh Wallers; and his mother was the daughter of John Hampden, of Hampden in the ſame county, and ſiſter to Hampden, the zealot of rebellion.

His father died while he was yet an infant, but left him an yearly income of three thouſand five hundred pounds; which, rating together the value of money and the cuſtoms of life, we may reckon more than equivalent to ten thouſand at the preſent time.

He was educated, by the care of his mother, at Eaton; and removed afterwards to King's College in Cambridge. He was ſent to parliament in his eighteenth, if not in his ſixteenth year, and frequented the court of James the Firſt, where he heard a very remarkable converſation, which the writer of the Life prefixed to his Works, who ſeems to have been well informed

formed of facts, though he may ſometimes err in ronology, has delivered as indubitably certain.

" He found Dr. Andrews, biſhop of Wincheſter, and Dr. Neale, biſhop of Durham, ſtanding behind his Majeſty's chair; and there happened ſomething extraordinary," continues this writer, " in the converſation thoſe prelates had with the king, on which Mr. Waller did often reflect. His Majeſty aſked the biſhops, " My Lords, cannot I take my ſubjects money, when I want it, without all this formality of parliament?" The biſhop of Durham readily anſwered, ' God forbid, Sir, but you ſhould: you are the breath of our noſtrils.' Whereupon the King turned and ſaid to the biſhop of Wincheſter, Well, my Lord, what ſay you?" ' Sir,' replied the biſhop, ' I have no ſkill to judge of parliamentary caſes.' The King anſwered, " No put-offs, my Lord; anſwer me preſently." ' Then, Sir,' ſaid he, ' I think it is lawful for you to take my brother Neale's money; for he offers it.' Mr. Waller ſaid, the company was pleaſed with this anſwer, and the wit of it ſeemed to affect the King; for, a certain lord coming in ſoon after, his Majeſty cried out, " Oh, my lord, they ſay you lig with my Lady." ' No, Sir,' ſays his Lordſhip in confuſion; ' but I like her company, becauſe ſhe has ſo much wit.' " Why then," ſays the King, " do you not lig with my Lord of Wincheſter there?"

Waller's political and poetical life began nearly together. In his eighteenth year he wrote the poem that pears in his works, on " the Prince's Eſcape at St. ndero;" a piece which juſtifies the obſervation made one of his editors, that he attained, by a felicity

like

like inſtinct, a ſtyle which perhaps will never be obſolete; and that, "were we to judge only by the word-"ing, we could not know what was wrote at twenty, "and what at fourſcore." His verſification was, in his firſt eſſay, ſuch as it appears in his laſt performance. By the peruſal of Fairfax's tranſlation of Taſſo, to which, as * Dryden relates, he confeſſed himſelf indebted for the ſmoothneſs of his numbers, and by his own nicety of obſervation, he had already formed ſuch a ſyſtem of metrical harmony as he never afterwards much needed, or much endeavoured, to improve. Denham corrected his numbers by experience, and gained ground gradually upon the ruggedneſs of his age; but what was acquired by Denham, was inherited by Waller.

The next poem, of which the ſubject ſeems to fix the time, is ſuppoſed by Mr. Fenton to be the Addreſs to the Queen, which he conſiders as congratulating her arrival, in Waller's twentieth year. He is apparently miſtaken; for the mention of the nation's obligations to her frequent pregnancy, proves that it was written when ſhe had brought many children. We have therefore no date of any other poetical production before that which the murder of the Duke of Buckingham occaſioned: the ſteadineſs with which the King received the news in the chapel, deſerved indeed to be reſcued from oblivion.

Neither of theſe pieces that ſeem to carry their own dates, could have been the ſudden effuſion of fancy. In the verſes on the Prince's eſcape, the prediction of his marriage with the princeſs of France muſt have been written after the event; in the other, the promiſes of the King's kindneſs to the deſcendants of Buckingham,

* Preface to his Fables. Orig. Edit.

which

which could not be properly praiſed till it had appeared by its effects, ſhew that time was taken for reviſion and improvement. It is not known that they were publiſhed till they appeared long afterwards with other poems.

Waller was not one of thoſe idolaters of praiſe who cultivate their minds at the expence of their fortunes. Rich as he was by inheritance, he took care early to grow richer, by marrying Mrs. Banks, a great heireſs in the city, whom the intereſt of the court was employed to obtain for Mr. Crofts. Having brought him a ſon, who died young, and a daughter, who was afterwards married to Mr. Dormer of Oxfordſhire, ſhe died in childbed, and left him a widower of about five and twenty, gay and wealthy, to pleaſe himſelf with another marriage.

Being too young to reſiſt beauty, and probably too vain to think himſelf reſiſtible, he fixed his heart, perhaps half fondly and half ambitiouſly, upon the Lady Dorothea Sidney, eldeſt daughter of the Earl of Leiceſter, whom he courted by all the poetry in which Sachariſſa is celebrated; the name is derived from the Latin appellation of *ſugar*, and implies, if it means any thing, a ſpiritleſs mildneſs, and dull good-nature, ſuch as excites rather tenderneſs than eſteem, and ſuch as, though always treated with kindneſs, is never honoured or admired.

Yet he deſcribes Sachariſſa as a ſublime predominating beauty, of lofty charms, and imperious influence, on whom he looks with amazement rather than fondneſs, whoſe chains he wiſhes, though in vain, to break, and whoſe preſence is *wine* that *inflames to madneſs*.

His acquaintance with this high-born dame gave wit no opportunity of boaſting its influence; ſhe was

not to be subdued by the powers of verse, but rejected his addresses, it is said, with disdain, and drove him away to solace his disappointment with Amoret or Phillis*. She married in 1639 the Earl of Sunderland, who

* It is by no means clear, that Waller ever made his personal addresses to this lady, or that a sense of her worth and the dignity of that truly noble family from which she was descended, might not awe him into silence on the subject of marriage, for it is certain that, at the time when Waller was celebrating her in verse, her parents were solicitous about disposing of her. Among the Sidney papers are sundry letters from her mother, the countess of Leicester, to the earl her husband, abroad, wherein she expresses a strong desire to have her daughter well matched. In one she says, "It "would joy me much to receive some hope of that lord's addresses "to Doll which once you writ of to me." In another she professes to doubt, that lord Holland is not real to lord Devonshire's marrying Doll; and in another is the following passage to the same purpose of her daughter's marriage:

"Now concerning Doll, of whom I can neither say what I desire, "nor what I thought I should have done; for I find my lord Love-"lace so uncertain and so idle, so much addicted to mean company, "and so easily drawn to debauchery, as it is now my study how to "break off with him in such a manner as it may be said that we re-"fused him; for since Sunday last we have not seen him, though "he be every day near us. Many particulars I could tell you of his "wildness; but the knowledge of them would be of no use to you, "since he is likely to be a stranger to us; for though his estate is "good, his person pretty enough, and his wit much more than "ordinary, yet dare I not venture to give Doll to him. And [illegible] "[illegible] lord of Devonshire, I can say as little to please you; "for though his mother and sister made fair shews of good in en-"trans to us, yet, in the end, we find them just as I expected, full "of deceit and jugling." Vide Collins's Collection of the Sidney Papers, vol. II. p. 252. 4[illegible]. 4[illegible], 294.

It no where appears that any offers, on the part of Mr. Waller, [illegible] of that [illegible] daughter, which this lady was [illegible] for this purpose were [illegible] young nobleman, who, [illegible] alone to have been worthy of her.

By

who died at Newberry in the king's cauſe; and, in her old age, meeting ſomewhere with Waller, aſked him, when he would again write ſuch verſes upon her; "When you are as young, Madam," ſaid he, "and "as handſome, as you were then."

In this part of his life it was that he was known to Clarendon, among the reſt of the men who were eminent in that age for genius and literature; but known ſo little to his advantage, that they who read his character will not much condemn Sachariſſa, that ſhe did not deſcend from her rank to his embraces, nor think every excellence compriſed in wit.

The Lady was, indeed, inexorable; but his uncommon qualifications, though they had no power upon her, recommended him to the ſcholars and ſtateſmen; and undoubtedly many beauties of that time, however they might receive his love, were proud of his praiſes. Who they were, whom he dignifies with poetical

By the way, he was, at the time of his marriage, only lord Spencer, not being created earl of Sunderland till near four years after.

And here let me take notice of a paſſage in one of the letters above referred to, and for the honour of the female ſex inſert it, as containing the nobleſt ſentiments of eſteem and conjugal affection that language can expreſs. Writing to her lord at Paris, lady Leiceſter thus concludes her letter: "All the children I will leave here [at Penſ-"hurſt], according to your advice; and, if you can ſpare Daniel, I "deſire that you will ſend him to me for the time of my being at "London. Mr. Seladine comes in with your letter, whom I am en-"gaged to entertain a little; beſides, it is ſupper time, or elſe I "ſhould beſtow one ſide of paper in making love to you: and ſince "I may with modeſty expreſs it, I will ſay that if it be love to think "on you ſleeping and waking, to diſcourſe of nothing with pleaſure "but what concerns you, to wiſh myſelf every hour with you, and "to pray for you, with as much devotion as for my own ſoul, then "certainly it may be ſaid that I am in love; and this is all that you "ſhall at this time hear from Your, D. LEYCESTER."

names, cannot now be known. Amoret, according to Mr. Fenton, was the Lady Sophia Murray. Perhaps by traditions preſerved in families more may be diſcovered.

From the verſes written at Penſhurſt, it has been collected that he diverted his diſappointment by a voyage; and his biographers, from his poem on the Whales, think it not improbable that he viſited the Bermudas; but it ſeems much more likely that he ſhould amuſe himſelf with forming an imaginary ſcene, than that ſo important an incident, as a viſit to America, ſhould have been left floating in conjectural probability.

From his twenty-eighth to his thirty-fifth year, he wrote his pieces on the Reduction of Sallee; on the Reparation of St. Paul's; to the King on his Navy; the panegyrick on the Queen Mother; the two poems to the Earl of Northumberland; and perhaps others, of which the time cannot be diſcovered.

When he had loſt all hopes of Sachariſſa, he looked round him for an eaſier conqueſt, and gained a Lady of the family of Breſſe, or Breaux. The time of his marriage is not exactly known. It has not been diſcovered that this wife was celebrated by his poetry; nor is any thing told of her, but that ſhe brought him many children. He doubtleſs ſometimes ſighed for ſome whom it would have been afraid to own; and perhaps married one whom he would have been aſhamed to praiſe. Many qualities contribute to connubial happineſs, upon which poetry has no colours to beſtow; and many airs and faſhions may delight imagination, which he who flatters them never can approve. There are charms made only for diſtant admiration. No ſpectacle is nobler than a blaze.

Of

Of this wife, his biographers have recorded that ſhe gave him five ſons and eight daughters.

During the long interval of parliament, he is repreſented as living among thoſe with whom it was moſt honourable to converſe, and enjoying an exuberant fortune with that independence and liberty of ſpeech and conduct which wealth ought always to produce. He was however conſidered as the kinſman of Hampden, and was therefore ſuppoſed by the courtiers not to favour them.

When the parliament was called in 1640, it appeared that Waller's political character had not been miſtaken. The King's demand of a ſupply produced one of thoſe noiſy ſpeeches which diſaffection and diſcontent regularly dictate; a ſpeech filled with hyperbolical complaints of imaginary grievances. "They," ſays he, "who think themſelves already undone can "never apprehend themſelves in danger; and they "who have nothing left can never give freely." Political truth is equally in danger from the praiſes of courtiers, and the exclamations of patriots.

He then proceeds to rail at the clergy, being ſure at that time of a favourable audience. His topick is ſuch as will always ſerve its purpoſe; an accuſation of acting and preaching only for preferment: and he exhorts the Commons *carefully* to *provide* for their *protection againſt Pulpit Law*.

It always gratifies curioſity to trace a ſentiment. Waller has in this ſpeech quoted Hooker in one paſſage; and in another has copied him, without quoting. "Religion," ſays Waller, "ought to be the firſt "thing in our purpoſe and deſires; but that which is "firſt in dignity is not always to precede in order of

" time; for well-being ſuppoſes a being; and the firſt " impediment which men naturally endeavour to re- " move, is the want of thoſe things without which " they cannot ſubſiſt. God firſt aſſigned unto Adam " maintenance of life, and gave him a title to the reſt " of the creatures before he appointed a law to ob- " ſerve."

" God firſt aſſigned Adam," ſays Hooker, " main- " tenance of life, and then appointed him a law to " obſerve.—True it is, that the kingdom of God muſt " be the firſt thing in our purpoſe and deſires; but " inaſmuch as a righteous life preſuppoſeth life, in- " aſmuch as to live virtuouſly it is impoſſible, except " we live; therefore the firſt impediment which na- " turally we endeavour to remove is penury, and " want of things without which we cannot live."

The ſpeech is vehement; but the great poſition, that grievances ought to be redreſſed before ſupplies are granted, is agreeable enough to law and reaſon: nor was Waller, if his biographer may be credited, ſuch an enemy to the King, as not to wiſh his diſtreſſes lightened; for he relates, " that the King ſent " particularly to Waller, to ſecond his demand of " ſome ſubſidies to pay off the army; and Sir Henry " Vane objecting againſt firſt voting a ſupply, becauſe " the King would not accept unleſs it came up to his " proportion, Mr. Waller ſpoke earneſtly to Sir Thomas " Jermyn, comptroller of the houſehold, to ſave his " maſter from the effects of ſo bold a falſity; 'for, he " ſaid, I am but a country gentleman, and cannot " pretend to know the King's mind:' but Sir Thomas " durſt not contradict the ſecretary; and his ſon, the " Earl of St. Albans, afterwards told Mr. Waller, that " *his father's* cowardice ruined the King."

In

In the Long Parliament, which, unhappily for the nation, met Nov. 3, 1640, Waller repreſented Agmondeſham the third time; and was conſidered by the diſcontented party as a man ſufficiently truſty and acrimonious to be employed in managing the proſecution of Judge Crawley, for his opinion in favour of ſhip-money; and his ſpeech ſhews that he did not diſappoint their expectations. He was probably the more ardent, as his uncle Hampden had been particularly engaged in the diſpute, and by a ſentence which ſeems generally to be thought unconſtitutional, particularly injured.

He was not however a bigot to his party, nor adopted all their opinions. When the great queſtion, whether Epiſcopacy ought to be aboliſhed, was debated, he ſpoke againſt the innovation ſo coolly, ſo reaſonably, and ſo firmly, that it is not without great injury to his name that his ſpeech, which was as follows, has been hitherto omitted in his works:

* "There is no doubt but the ſenſe of what this na-
"tion hath ſuffered from the preſent Biſhops, hath
"produced theſe complaints; and the apprehenſions
"men have of ſuffering the like, in time to come,
"make ſo many deſire the taking away of Epiſcopacy:
"but I conceive it is poſſible that we may not, now,
"take a right meaſure of the minds of the people by
"their petitions; for, when they ſubſcribed them,
"the Biſhops were armed with a dangerous commiſſion
"of making new canons, impoſing new oaths, and
"the like; but now we have diſarmed them of that
"power. Theſe petitioners lately did look upon

* This ſpeech has been retrieved, from a paper printed at that time, by the writers of the Parliamentary Hiſtory. Orig. Edit.

" Epiſcopacy as a beaſt armed with horns and claws;
" but now that we have cut and pared them, (and may,
" if we ſee cauſe, yet reduce it into narrower bounds)
" it may, perhaps, be more agreeable. Howſoever,
" if they be ſtill in paſſion, it becomes us ſoberly to
" conſider the right uſe and antiquity thereof; and not
" to comply further with a general deſire, than may
" ſtand with a general good.

" We have already ſhewed, that epiſcopacy and
" the evils thereof are mingled like water and oil;
" we have alſo, in part, ſevered them; but I believe
" you will find, that our laws and the preſent govern-
" ment of the church are mingled like wine and water;
" ſo inſeparable, that the abrogation of, at leaſt, a
" hundred of our laws is deſired in theſe petitions. I
" have often heard a noble anſwer of the Lords, com-
" mended in this houſe, to a propoſition of like na-
" ture, but of leſs conſequence; they gave no other
" reaſon of their refuſal but this, *Nolumus mutare Leges*
" *Angliæ*: it was the biſhops who ſo anſwered then;
" and it would become the dignity and wiſdom of this
" houſe to anſwer the people, now, with a *Nolumus*
" *mutare*.

" I ſee ſome are moved with a number of hands
" againſt the Biſhops: which, I confeſs, rather in-
" clines me to their defence; for I look upon epiſco-
" pacy as a counterſcarp, or out-work; which, if it
" be taken by this aſſault of the people, and, withall,
" this myſtery once revealed, *That we might deny them*
" *nothing when they ask it thus in troops*, we may, in
" the next place, have as hard a taſk to defend our
" property, as we have lately had to recover it from
" the Prerogative. If, by multiplying hands and pe-
" titions, they prevail for an equality in things eccle-
" ſiaſtical,

" ſiaſtical, the next demand perhaps may be *Lex*
" *Agraria*, the like equality in things temporal.

" The Roman ſtory tells us, That when the people
" began to flock about the ſenate, and were more
" curious to direct and know what was done, than to
" obey, that Common-wealth ſoon came to ruin: their
" *Legem rogare* grew quickly to be a *Legem ferre*;
" and after, when their legions had found that they
" could make a Dictator, they never ſuffered the ſe-
" nate to have a voice any more in ſuch election.

" If theſe great innovations proceed, I ſhall expect
" a flat and level in learning too, as well as in church-
" preferments: *Honos alit Artes*. And though it be
" true, that grave and pious men do ſtudy for learn-
" ing-ſake, and embrace virtue for itſelf; yet it is
" true, that youth, which is the ſeaſon when learning
" is gotten, is not without ambition; nor will ever
" take pains to excel in any thing, when there is not
" ſome hope of excelling others in reward and dignity.

" There are two reaſons chiefly alleged againſt our
" church-government.

" Firſt, Scripture, which, as ſome men think,
" points out another form.

" Second, The abuſes of the preſent ſuperiors.

" For Scripture, I will not diſpute it in this place;
" but I am confident that, whenever an equal diviſion
" of lands and goods ſhall be deſired, there will be as
" many places in Scripture found out, which ſeem to fa-
" vour that, as there are now alleged againſt the prelacy
" or preferment in the church. And, as for abuſes,
" where you are now, in the Remonſtrance told, what this
" and that poor man hath ſuffered by the biſhops, you
" may be preſented with a thouſand inſtances of poor
" men

"men that have received hard meaſure fr. their "landlords; and of worldly goods abuſed, to the in- "jury of others, and diſadvantage of the owners.

"And therefore, Mr. Speaker, my humble motion "is, That we may ſettle men's minds herein; and, by "a queſtion, declare our reſolution, *to reform*, that is, "*not to aboliſh, Epiſcopacy.*"

It cannot but be wiſhed that he, who could ſpeak in this manner, had been able to act with ſpirit and uniformity.

When the Commons began to ſet the royal authority at open defiance, Waller is ſaid to have withdrawn from the houſe, and to have returned with the king's permiſſion; and, when the king ſet up his ſtandard, he ſent him a thouſand broad-pieces. He continued, however, to ſit in the rebellious conventicle; but "ſpoke," ſays Clarendon, "with great "ſharpneſs and freedom, which, now there was no "danger of being outvoted, was not reſtrained; and "therefore uſed as an argument againſt thoſe who "were gone upon pretence that they were not ſuffered "to deliver their opinion freely in the houſe, which "could not be believed, when all men knew what li- "berty Mr. Waller took, and ſpoke every day with "impunity againſt the ſenſe and proceedings of the "houſe."

Waller, as he continued to ſit, was one of the commiſſioners nominated by the parliament to treat with the king at Oxford; and when they were preſented, the King ſaid to him, "Though you are the laſt, you "are not the loweſt nor the leaſt in my favour." Whitlock, who, being another of the commiſſioners, was witneſs of this kindneſs, imputes it to the king's know-

knowledge of the plot, in which Waller appeared afterwards to have been engaged againſt the parliament. Fenton, with equal probability, believes that his attempt to promote the royal cauſe aroſe from his ſenſibility of the king's tenderneſs. Whitlock ſays nothing of his behaviour at Oxford: he was ſent with ſeveral others to add pomp to the commiſſion, but was not one of thoſe to whom the truſt of treating was imparted.

The engagement, known by the name of Waller's plot, was ſoon afterwards diſcovered. Waller had a brother-in-law, Tomkyns, who was clerk of the Queen's council, and at the ſame time had a very numerous acquaintance, and great influence, in the city. Waller and he, converſing with great confidence, told both their own ſecrets and thoſe of their friends; and, ſurveying the wide extent of their converſation, imagined that they found in the majority of all ranks great diſapprobation of the violence of the Commons, and unwillingneſs to continue the war. They knew that many favoured the king, whoſe fear concealed their loyalty; and many deſired peace, though they durſt not oppoſe the clamour for war; and they imagined that if thoſe who had theſe good intentions could be informed of their own ſtrength, and enabled by intelligence to act together, they might overpower the fury of ſedition, by refuſing to comply with the ordinance for the twentieth part, and the other taxes levied for the ſupport of the rebel army, and by uniting great numbers in a petition for peace. They proceeded with great caution. Three only met in one place, and no man was allowed to impart the plot to more than two others, ſo that if any ſhould be ſuſ-

pected

pected or ſeized, more than three could not be endangered.

Lord Conway joined in the deſign, and, Clarendon imagines, incidentally mingled, as he was a ſoldier, ſome martial hopes or projects, which however were only mentioned, the main deſign being to bring the loyal inhabitants to the knowledge of each other; for which purpoſe there was to be appointed one in every diſtrict, to diſtinguiſh the friends of the king, the adherents to the parliament, and the neutrals. How far they proceeded does not appear; the reſult of their enquiry, as Pym declared *, was, that within the walls, for one that was for the Royaliſts, there were three againſt them; but that without the walls, for one that was againſt them, there were five for them. Whether this was ſaid from knowledge or gueſs, was perhaps never enquired.

It is the opinion of Clarendon, that in Waller's plan no violence or ſanguinary reſiſtance was compriſed; that he intended only to abate the confidence of the rebels by publick declarations, and to weaken their powers by an oppoſition to new ſupplies. This, in calmer times, and more than this, is done without fear; but ſuch was the acrimony of the commons, that no method of obſtructing them was ſafe.

About this time another deſign was formed by Sir Nicholas Criſpe, a man of loyalty that deſerves perpetual remembrance: when he was a merchant in the city, he gave and procured the king, in his exigences, an hundred thouſand pounds; and, when he

* Parliamentary Hiſtory, Vol. XII. Orig. Edit.

was

s driven from the Exchange, raiſed a regiment, and mmanded it.

Sir Nicholas flattered himſelf with an opinion, at ſome provocation would ſo much exaſperate, or me opportunity ſo much encourage, the King's ends in the city, that they would break out in open ſtance, and then would want only a lawful ſtandard, d an authoriſed commander; and extorted from the ing, whoſe judgement too frequently yielded to im- rtunity, a commiſſion of array, directed to ſuch as : thought proper to nominate, which was ſent to ondon by the Lady Aubigney. She knew not what e carried, but was to deliver it on the communica- on of a certain token which Sir Nicholas imparted.

This commiſſion could be only intended to lie ready ll the time ſhould require it. To have attempted to iſe any forces, would have been certain deſtruction; could be of uſe only when the forces ſhould appear. his was, however, an act preparatory to martial hoſ- lity. Criſpe would undoubtedly have put an end to ie ſeſſion of parliament, had his ſtrength been equal his zeal; and out of the deſign of Criſpe, which volved very little danger, and that of Waller, which as an act purely civil, they compounded a horrid id dreadful plot.

The diſcovery of Waller's deſign is variouſly related. 1 "Clarendon's Hiſtory" it is told, that a ſervant of 'omkyns, lurking behind the hangings when his aſter was in conference with Waller, heard enough) qualify him for an informer, and carried his intel- gence to Pym. A manuſcript, quoted in the "Life of Waller," relates, that "he was betrayed by his ſiſter Price, and her Preſbyterian chaplain Mr. Goode,

" who ſtole ſome of his papers; and if he had not ſtrangely " dreamed the night before, that his ſiſter had be- " trayed him, and thereupon burnt the reſt of his " papers by the fire that was in his chimney, he had " certainly loſt his life by it." The queſtion cannot be decided. It is not unreaſonable to believe that the men in power, receiving intelligence from the ſiſter, would employ the ſervant of Tomkyns to liſten at the conference, that they might avoid an act ſo offenſive as that of deſtroying the brother by the ſiſter's teſtimony.

The plot was publiſhed in the moſt terrifick manner. On the 31ſt of May (1643), at a ſolemn faſt, when they were liſtening to the ſermon, a meſſenger entered the church, and communicated his errand to Pym, who whiſpered it to others that were placed near him, and then went with them out of the church, leaving the reſt in ſolicitude and amazement. They immediately ſent guards to proper places, and that night apprehended Tomkyns and Waller; having yet traced nothing but that letters had been intercepted, from which it appeared that the parliament and the city were ſoon to be delivered into the hands of the cavaliers.

They perhaps yet knew little themſelves, beyond ſome general and indiſtinct notices. " But Waller," ſays Clarendon, " was ſo confounded with fear, that " he confeſſed whatever he had heard, ſaid, thought, " or ſeen; all that he knew of himſelf, and all that " he ſuſpected of others, without concealing any per- " ſon, of what degree or quality ſoever, or any diſ- " courſe which he had ever upon any occaſion enter- " tained with them; what ſuch and ſuch ladies of

"great honour, to whom, upon the credit of his wit "and great reputation, he had been admitted, had "ſpoke to him in their chambers upon the proceed- "ings in the Houſes, and how they had encouraged "him to oppoſe them; what correſpondence and in- "tercourſe they had with ſome Miniſters of State at "Oxford, and how they had conveyed all intelligence "thither." He accuſed the Earl of Portland and Lord Conway as co-operating in the tranſaction; and teſtified that the Earl of Northumberland had declared himſelf diſpoſed in favour of any attempt that might check the violence of the Parliament, and reconcile them to the King.

He undoubtedly confeſſed much, which they could never have diſcovered, and perhaps ſomewhat which they would wiſh to have been ſuppreſſed; for it is inconvenient, in the conflict of factions, to have that diſaffection known which cannot ſafely be puniſhed.

Tomkyns was ſeized on the ſame night with Waller, and appears likewiſe to have partaken of his cowardice; for he gave notice of Criſpe's commiſſion of array, of which Clarendon never knew how it was diſcovered. Tomkyns had been ſent with the token appointed, to demand it from Lady Aubigney, and had buried it in his garden, where, by his direction, it was dug up; and thus the rebels obtained, what Clarendon confeſſes them to have had, the original copy.

It can raiſe no wonder that they formed one plot out of theſe two deſigns, however remote from each other, when they ſaw the ſame agent employed in both, and found the commiſſion of array in the hands of him who was employed in collecting the opinions and affections of the people.

Of

Of the plot, thus combined, they took care to make the moſt. They ſent Pym among the citizens, to tell them of their imminent danger, and happy eſcape; and inform them, that the deſign was "to ſeize the "Lord Mayor and all the Committee of Militia, and "would not ſpare one of them." They drew up a vow and covenant, to be taken by every member of either houſe, by which he declared his deteſtation of all conſpiracies againſt the parliament, and his reſolution to detect and oppoſe them. They then appointed a day of thankſgiving for this wonderful delivery; which ſhut out, ſays Clarendon, all doubts whether there had been ſuch a deliverance, and whether the plot was real or fictitious.

On June 11, the Earl of Portland and Lord Conway were committed, one to the cuſtody of the mayor, and the other of the ſheriff; but their lands and goods were not ſeized.

Waller was ſtill to immerſe himſelf deeper in ignominy. The Earl of Portland and Lord Conway denied the charge; and there was no evidence againſt them but the confeſſion of Waller, of which undoubtedly many would be inclined to queſtion the veracity. With theſe doubts he was ſo much terrified, that he endeavoured to perſuade Portland to a declaration like his own, by a letter extant in Fenton's edition. "But for me," ſays he, "you had never known any thing of this bu-"ſineſs, which was prepared for another: and there-"fore I cannot imagine why you ſhould hide it ſo far "as to conduct your own ruin by concealing it, and "perſiſting unreaſonably to hide that truth, which, "without you, already is, and will every day be made "more, manifeſt. Can you imagine yourſelf bound "in honour to keep that ſecret, which is already re-

"vealed

l by another; or poſſible it ſhould ſtill be a ſe-
which is known to one of the other?—If you
t to be cruel to yourſelf for their ſakes who de-
it not, it will nevertheleſs be made appear, ere
I fear, to your ruin. Surely, if I had the
ineſs to wait on you, I could move you to
aſſionate both yourſelf and me, who, deſperate
' caſe is, am deſirous to die with the honour of
; known to have declared the truth. You have
aſon to contend to hide what is already reveal-
inconſiderately to throw away yourſelf, for the
:ſt of others, to whom you are leſs obliged than
ıre aware of."

perſuaſion ſeems to have had little effect. Port-
t (June 29) a letter to the Lords, to tell them,
" is in cuſtody, as he conceives, without any
ge; and that, by what Mr. Waller hath threat-
him with ſince he was impriſoned, he doth
ehend a very cruel, long, and ruinous re-
ıt:—He therefore prays, that he may not find
ffects of Mr. Waller's threats, by a long and
impriſonment; but may be ſpeedily brought
legal trial, and then he is confident the vanity
falſehood of thoſe informations which have been
n againſt him will appear."

nſequence of this letter, the Lords ordered Port-
d Waller to be confronted; when the one repeat-
harge, and the other his denial. The examina-
the plot being continued (July 1), Thinn, uſher
houſe of Lords, depoſed, that Mr. Waller hav-
l a conference with the Lord Portland in an up-
m, Lord Portland ſaid, when he came down,
me the favour to tell my Lord Northumberland,
Mr. Waller has extremely preſſed me to ſave

" my own life and his, by throwing the blame upon " the Lord Conway and the Earl of Northumberland."

Waller, in his letter to Portland, tells him of the reaſons which he could urge with reſiſtleſs efficacy in a perſonal conference; but he over-rated his own oratory; his vehemence, whether of perſuaſion or intreaty, was returned with contempt.

One of his arguments with Portland is, that the plot is already known to a woman. This woman was doubtleſs Lady Aubigney, who, upon this occaſion, was committed to cuſtody; but who, in reality, when ſhe delivered the commiſſion, knew not what it was.

The parliament then proceeded againſt the conſpirators, and committed their trial to a council of war. Tomkyns and Chaloner were hanged near their own doors. Tomkyns, when he came to die, ſaid it was a *fooliſh buſineſs*; and indeed there ſeems to have been no hope that it ſhould eſcape diſcovery; for though never more than three met at a time, yet a deſign ſo extenſive muſt, by neceſſity, be communicated to many, who could not be expected to be all faithful, and all prudent. Chaloner was attended at his execution by Hugh Peters. His crime was that he had commiſſion to raiſe money for the King; but it appears not that the money was to be expended upon the advancement of either Criſpe or Waller's plot.

The Earl of Northumberland, being too great for proſecution, was only once examined before the Lords. The Earl of Portland and lord Conway perſiſting to deny the charge, and no teſtimony but Waller's yet appearing againſt them, were, after a long impriſonment, admitted to bail. Haſſel, the King's meſſenger, who carried the letters to Oxford, died the night before his trial. Hampden eſcaped death, perhaps by the intereſt

ereſt of his family; but was kept in priſon to the end of his life. They whoſe names were inſerted in the commiſſion of array were not capitally puniſhed, as it could not be proved that they had conſented to their own nomination; but they were conſidered as malignants, and their eſtates were ſeized.

"Waller, though confeſſedly," ſays Clarendon, "the moſt guilty, with incredible diſſimulation affected ſuch a remorſe of conſcience, that his trial "was put off, out of Chriſtian compaſſion, till he "might recover his underſtanding." What uſe he made of this interval, with what liberality and ſucceſs he diſtributed flattery and money, and how, when he was brought (July 4) before the Houſe, he confeſſed and lamented, and ſubmitted and implored, may be read in the Hiſtory of the Rebellion, (B. vii.). The ſpeech, to which Clarendon aſcribes the preſervation of of his *dear-bought life*, is inſerted in his works. The great hiſtorian, however, ſeems to have been miſtaken in relating that *he prevailed* in the principal part of his ſupplication, *not to be tried by a Council of War*; for, according to Whitlock, he was by expulſion from the Houſe abandoned to the tribunal which he ſo much dreaded, and, being tried and condemned, was reprieved by Eſſex; but after a year's impriſonment, in which time reſentment grew leſs acrimonious, paying a fine of ten thouſand pounds, he was permitted *to recollect himſelf in another country*.

Of his behaviour in this part of his life, it is not neceſſary to direct the reader's opinion. "Let us not," ſays his laſt ingenious biographer, "condemn him with "untempered ſeverity, becauſe he was not a prodigy "which the world hath ſeldom ſeen, becauſe his charac-"ter included not the poet, the orator, and the hero."

For the place of his exile he choſe France, and ſtaid ſome time at Roan, where his daughter Margaret was born, who was afterwards his favourite, and his amanuenſis. He then removed to Paris, where he lived with great ſplendor and hoſpitality; and from time to time amuſed himſelf with poetry, in which he ſometimes ſpeaks of the rebels, and their uſurpation, in the natural language of an honeſt man.

At laſt it became neceſſary, for his ſupport, to ſell his wife's jewels; and being reduced, as he ſaid, at laſt *to the rump-jewel*, he ſolicited from Cromwell permiſſion to return, and obtained it by the intereſt of colonel Scroop, to whom his ſiſter was married. Upon the remains of a fortune, which the danger of his life had very much diminiſhed, he lived at Hall-barn, a houſe built by himſelf, very near to Beaconsfield, where his mother reſided. His mother, though related to Cromwell and Hampden, was zealous for the royal cauſe, and, when Cromwell viſited her, uſed to reproach him; he, in return, would throw a napkin at her, and ſay he would not diſpute with his aunt; but finding in time that ſhe acted for the king, as well as talked, he made her a priſoner to her own daughter, in her own houſe. If he would do any thing, he could not do leſs.

Cromwell, now protector, received Waller, as his kinſman, to a familiar converſation. Waller, as he uſed to relate, found him ſufficiently verſed in ancient hiſtory; and when any of his enthuſiaſtick friends came to adviſe or conſult him, could ſometimes overhear him diſcourſing in the cant of the times: but, when he returned, he would ſay, "Couſin Waller, I muſt "talk to theſe men in their own way:" and reſumed the common ſtyle of converſation.

He

He repaid the Protector for his favours (1654) by the famous panegyrick, which has been always conſidered as the firſt of his poetical productions. His choice of encomiaſtick topicks is very judicious; for he conſiders Cromwell in his exaltation, without enquiring how he attained it; there is conſequently no mention of the rebel or the regicide. All the former part of his hero's life is veiled with ſhades; and nothing is brought to view but the chief, the governor, the defender of England's honour, and the enlarger of her dominion. The act of violence by which he obtained the ſupreme power is lightly treated, and decently juſtified. It was certainly to be deſired that the deteſtable band ſhould be diſſolved, which had deſtroyed the church, murdered the King, and filled the nation with tumult and oppreſſion; yet Cromwell had not the right of diſſolving them, for all that he had before done could be juſtified only by ſuppoſing them inveſted with lawful authority. But combinations of wickedneſs would overwhelm the world by the advantage which licentious principles afford, did not thoſe, who have long practiſed perfidy, grow faithleſs to each other.

In the poem on the war with Spain are ſome paſſages at leaſt equal to the beſt parts of the panegyrick; and, in the concluſion, the poet ventures yet a higher flight of flattery, by recommending royalty to Cromwell and the nation. Cromwell was very deſirous, as appears from his converſation, related by Whitlock, of adding the title to the power of monarchy, and is ſuppoſed to have been with-held from it partly by fear of the army, and partly by fear of the laws, which, when he ſhould govern by the name of King, would have reſtrained

his authority. When therefore a deputation was ſolemnly ſent to invite him to the Crown, he, after a long conference, refuſed it; but is ſaid to have fainted in his coach, when he parted from them.

The poem on the death of the Protector ſeems to have been dictated by real veneration for his memory. Dryden and Sprat wrote on the ſame occaſion; but they were young men, ſtruggling into notice, and hoping for ſome favour from the ruling party. Waller had little to expect: he had received nothing but his pardon from Cromwell, and was not likely to aſk any thing from thoſe who ſhould ſucceed him.

Soon afterwards the Reſtauration ſupplied him with another ſubject; and he exerted his imagination, his elegance, and his melody, with equal alacrity, for Charles the Second. It is not poſſible to read, without ſome contempt and indignation, poems of the ſame author, aſcribing the higheſt degree of *power and piety* to Charles the Firſt, then transferring the ſame *power and piety* to Oliver Cromwell, now inviting Oliver to take the Crown, and then congratulating Charles the Second on his recovered right. Neither Cromwell nor Charles could value his teſtimony as the effect of conviction, or receive his praiſes as effuſions of reverence; they could conſider them but as the labour of invention, and the tribute of dependence.

Poets, indeed, profeſs fiction; but the legitimate end of fiction is the conveyance of truth; and he that has flattery ready for all whom the viciſſitudes of the world happen to exalt, muſt be ſcorned as a proſtituted mind, that may retain the glitter of wit, but has loſt the dignity of virtue.

The

The Congratulation was conſidered as inferior in poetical merit to the Panegyrick; and it is reported, that, when the king told Waller of the diſparity, he anſwered, "Poets, Sir, ſucceed better in fiction than "in truth."

The Congratulation is indeed not inferior to the Panegyrick, either by decay of genius, or for want of diligence; but becauſe Cromwell had done much, and Charles had done little. Cromwell wanted nothing to raiſe him to heroick excellence but virtue; and virtue his poet thought himſelf at liberty to ſupply. Charles had yet only the merit of ſtruggling without ſucceſs, and ſuffering without deſpair. A life of eſcapes and indigence could ſupply poetry with no ſplendid images.

In the firſt parliament ſummoned by Charles the Second (March 8, 1661), Waller ſat for Haſtings in Suſſex, and ſerved for different places in all the parliaments of that reign. In a time when fancy and gaiety were the moſt powerful recommendations to regard, it is not likely that Waller was forgotten. He paſſed his time in the company that was higheſt, both in rank and wit, from which even his obſtinate ſobriety did not exclude him. Though he drank water, he was enabled by his fertility of mind to heighten the mirth of Bacchanalian aſſemblies; and Mr. Saville ſaid, that "no man in England ſhould keep him com-"pany without drinking but Ned Waller."

The praiſe given him by St. Evremond is a proof of his reputation; for it was only by his reputation that he could be known, as a writer, to a man who, though he lived a great part of a long life upon an Engliſh penſion, never condeſcended to underſtand the language of the nation that maintained him.

In the parliament, "he was," ſays Burnet, the de-"light of the houſe, and though old ſaid the liveliest "things of any among them." This, however, is ſaid in his account of the year ſeventy-five, when Waller was only ſeventy. His name as a ſpeaker occurs often in Grey's Collections; but I have found no extracts that can be more quoted as exhibiting ſallies of gaiety than cogency of argument.

He was of ſuch conſideration, that his remarks were circulated and recorded. When the duke of York's influence was high, both in Scotland and England, it drew, ſays Burnet, a lively reflection from Waller the celebrated wit. "He ſaid, the houſe of commons "had reſolved that the duke ſhould not reign after the "king's death; but the king, in oppoſition to them, "had reſolved that he ſhould reign even in his life." If there appear no extraordinary *liveline/s* in this *remark*, yet its reception proves the ſpeaker to have been a *celebrated wit*, to have had a name which the men of wit were proud of mentioning.

He did not ſuffer his reputation to die gradually away, which may eaſily happen in a long life, but renewed his claim to poetical diſtinction from time to time, as occaſions were offered, either by publick events or private incidents; and, contenting himſelf with the influence of his muſe, or loving quiet better than influence, he never accepted any office of magiſtracy.

He was not, however, without ſome attention to his fortune; for he aſked from the King (in 1665) the provoſtſhip of Eaton College, and obtained it; but Clarendon refuſed to put the ſeal to the grant, alleging that it could be held only by a clergyman. It is known

nown that Sir Henry Wotton qualified himſelf for it y Deacon's orders.

To this oppoſition, the *Biographia* imputes the olence and acrimony with which Waller joined uckingham's faction in the proſecution of Clarendon. he motive was illiberal and diſhoneſt, and ſhewed that ore than ſixty years had not been able to teach him orality. His accuſation is ſuch as conſcience can rdly be ſuppoſed to dictate without the help of alice. "We were to be governed by janizaries inſtead of parliaments, and are in danger from a worſe plot than that of the fifth of November; then, if the Lords and commons had been deſtroyed, there had been a ſucceſſion; but here both had been deſtroyed for ever." This is the language of a man ho is glad of an opportunity to rail, and ready to crifice truth to intereſt at one time, and to anger at nother.

A year after the Chancellor's baniſhment, another acancy gave him encouragement for another petition hich the King referred to the council, who, after earing the queſtion argued by lawyers for three days, etermined that the office could be held only by a lergyman, according to the act of uniformity, ſince he provoſts had always received inſtitution, as for a arſonage, from the biſhops of Lincoln. The King hen ſaid, he could not break the Law which he had nade; and Dr. Zachary Cradock, famous for a ſingle ermon, at moſt for two ſermons, was choſen by the ellows.

That he aſked any thing more is not known; it s certain that he obtained nothing, though he continued

tinued obſequious to the court though the reſt of Charles's reign.

At the acceſſion of King James (in 1685) he was choſen for parliament, being then fourſcore, at Saltash in Cornwall; and wrote a *Preſage of the Downfall of the Turkiſh Empire*, which he preſented to the King on his birthday. It is remarked, by his commentator Fenton, that in reading Taſſo he had early imbibed a veneration for the heroes of the Holy War, and a zealous enmity to the Turks, which never left him. James, however, having ſoon after begun what he thought a holy war at home, made haſte to put all moleſtation of the Turks out of his power.

James treated him with kindneſs and familiarity, of which inſtances are given by the writer of his Life. One day, taking him into the cloſet, the King aſked him how he liked one of the pictures: "My "eyes," ſaid Waller, "are dim, and I do not know it." The king ſaid, it was the princeſs of Orange. "She "is," ſaid Waller, "like the greateſt woman in the "world." The King aſked who was that? and was anſwered, Queen Elizabeth. "I wonder," ſaid the King, "you ſhould think ſo; but I muſt confeſs ſhe "had a wiſe council." "And, Sir," ſaid Waller, "did you ever know a fool chuſe a wiſe one?" Such is the ſtory, which I once heard of ſome other man. Pointed axioms, and acute replies, fly looſe about the world, and are aſſigned ſucceſſively to thoſe whom it may be the faſhion to celebrate.

When the King knew that he was about to marry his daughter to Dr. Birch, a clergyman, he ordered a French gentleman to tell him, that "the King won-"dered he could think of marrying his daughter to a

falling church." "The King," ſays Waller, does me great honour, in taking notice of my domeſtick affairs; but I have lived long enough to obſerve that this falling church has got a trick of riſing again."

He took notice to his friends of the King's conduct; nd ſaid, that "he would be left like a whale upon the ſtrand." Whether he was privy to any of e tranſactions which ended in the Revolution, is t known. His heir joined the prince of Orange.

Having now attained an age beyond which the laws nature ſeldom ſuffer life to be extended, otherwiſe an by a future ſtate, he ſeems to have turned his ind upon preparation for the deciſive hour, and there-re conſecrated his poetry to devotion. It is plea-ng to diſcover that his piety was without weakneſs; at his intellectual powers continued vigorous; and at the lines which he compoſed when *he, for age, uld neither read nor write*, are not inferior to the effu-ons of his youth.

Towards the decline of life, he bought a ſmall houſe, ith a little land, at Colſhill; and ſaid, "he ſhould be glad to die, like the ſtag, where he was rouſed." his, however, did not happen. When he was at eaconsfield, he found his legs grow tumid: he went Windſor, where Sir Charles Scarborough then at-nded the King, and requeſted him, as both a friend nd phyſician, to tell him, *what that ſwelling meant.* Sir," anſwered Scarborough, "your blood will run no longer." Waller repeated ſome lines of Virgil, nd went home to die.

As the diſeaſe increaſed upon him, he compoſed imſelf for his departure; and calling upon Dr. Birch

to

to give him the holy ſacrament, he deſired his children to take it with him, and made an earneſt declaration of his faith in Chriſtianity. It now appeared, what part of his converſation with the great could be remembered with delight. He related, that being preſent when the duke of Buckingham talked profanely before King Charles, he ſaid to him, "My Lord, I "am a great deal older than your grace, and have, I "believe, heard more arguments for atheiſm than ever "your grace did; but I have lived long enough to ſee "there is nothing in them; and ſo, I hope, your "grace will."

He died October 21, 1687, and was buried at Beaconsfield, with a monument erected by his ſon's executors, for which Rymer wrote the inſcription, and which I hope is now reſcued from dilapidation.

He left ſeveral children by his ſecond wife; of whom, his daughter was married to Dr. Birch. Benjamin, the eldeſt ſon, was diſinherited, and ſent to New Jerſey, as wanting common underſtanding. Edmund, the ſecond ſon, inherited the eſtate, and repreſented Agmondeſham in parliament, but at laſt turned Quaker. William, the third ſon, was a merchant in London. Stephen, the fourth, was an eminent Doctor of Laws, and one of the Commiſſioners for the Union. There is ſaid to have been a fifth, of whom no account has deſcended.

The character of Waller, both moral and intellectual, has been drawn by Clarendon, to whom he was familiarly known, with nicety, which certainly none to whom he was not known can preſume to emulate.

It

It is therefore inſerted here, with ſuch remarks as others have ſupplied; after which, nothing remains but a critical examination of his poetry.

"Edmund Waller," ſays Clarendon, "was born "to a very fair eſtate, by the parſimony, or frugality, "of a wiſe father and mother: and he thought it ſo "commendable an advantage, that he reſolved to im- "prove it with his utmoſt care, upon which in his "nature he was too much intent; and, in order to "that, he was ſo much reſerved and retired, that he "was ſcarce ever heard of, till by his addreſs and "dexterity he had gotten a very rich wife in the city, "againſt all the recommendation and countenance and "authority of the Court, which was thoroughly en- "gaged on the behalf of Mr. Crofts; and which uſed "to be ſucceſsful in that age, againſt any oppoſition. "He had the good fortune to have an alliance and "friendſhip with Dr. Morley, who had aſſiſted and in- "ſtructed him in the reading many good books, to "which his natural parts and promptitude inclined "him, eſpecially the poets; and at the age when "other men uſed to give over writing verſes (for he "was near thirty years when he firſt engaged himſelf "in that exerciſe; at leaſt, that he was known to do "ſo), he ſurpriſed the town with two or three pieces "of that kind; as if a tenth Muſe had been newly "born to cheriſh drooping poetry. The Doctor at "that time brought him into that company, which "was moſt celebrated for good converſation; where "he was received and eſteemed, with great applauſe "and reſpect. He was a very pleaſant diſcourſer, in "earneſt and in jeſt, and therefore very grateful to all "kind

" kind of company, where he was not the leſs
" eſteemed for being very rich.

" He had been even nurſed in parliaments, where
" he ſat when he was very young; and ſo, when they
" were reſumed again (after a long intermiſſion), he
" appeared in thoſe aſſemblies with great advantage;
" having a graceful way of ſpeaking, and by thinking
" much on ſeveral arguments (which his temper and
" complexion, that had much of melancholic, inclined
" him to), he ſeemed often to ſpeak upon the ſudden,
" when the occaſion had only adminiſtred the oppor-
" tunity of ſaying what he had thoroughly conſidered,
" which gave a great luſtre to all he ſaid; which yet
" was rather of delight than weight. There needs no
" more be ſaid to extol the excellence and power of
" his wit, and pleaſantneſs of his converſation, than
" that it was of magnitude enough to cover a world
" of very great faults; that is, ſo to cover them, that
" they were not taken notice of to his reproach; viz. a
" narrowneſs in his nature to the loweſt degree; an
" abjectneſs and want of courage to ſupport him in
" any virtuous undertaking; an inſinuation and ſer-
" vile flattery to the height, the vaineſt and moſt im-
" perious nature could be contented with; that it pre-
" ſerved and won his life from thoſe who moſt reſolved
" to take it, and in an occaſion in which he ought to
" have been ambitious to have loſt it; and then pre-
" ſerved him again, from the reproach, and contempt
" that was due to him, for ſo preſerving it, and for
" vindicating it at ſuch a price; that it had power
" to reconcile him to thoſe, whom he had moſt of-
" fended and provoked; and continued to his age
" with that rare felicity, that his company was accep-
" table,

table, where his ſpirit was odious; and he was at leaſt pitied, where he was moſt deteſted."

Such is the account of Clarendon; on which it may ot be improper to make ſome remarks.

"He was very little known till he had obtained a rich wife in the city."

He obtained a rich wife about the age of three-and-wenty; an age before which few men are conſpicuous uch to their advantage. He was known, however, parliament and at court; and, if he ſpent part of is time in privacy, it is not unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, at he endeavoured the improvement of his mind as ell as of his fortune.

That Clarendon might misjudge the motive of his etirement is the more probable, becauſe he has evi-ently miſtaken the commencement of his poetry, hich he ſuppoſes him not to have attempted before hirty. As his firſt pieces were perhaps not printed, he ſucceſſion of his compoſitions was not known; and larendon, who cannot be imagined to have been very tudious of poetry, did not rectify his firſt opinion by onſulting Waller's book.

Clarendon obſerves, that he was introduced to the wits of the age by Dr. Morley; but the writer of his Life relates that he was already among them, when, earing a noiſe in the ſtreet, and enquiring the cauſe, hey found a ſon of Ben Jonſon under an arreſt. This vas Morley, whom Waller ſet free at the expence of ne hundred pounds, took him into the country as di-ector of his ſtudies, and then procured him admiſſion nto the company of the friends of literature. Of this act, Clarendon had a nearer knowledge than the bio-grapher, and is therefore more to be credited.

The

The account of Waller's parliamentary eloquence is ſeconded by Burnet, who, though he calls him "the "delight of the houſe," adds, that "he was only con- "cerned to ſay that, which ſhould make him be ap- "plauded, he never laid the buſineſs of the Houſe "to heart, being a vain and empty though a witty "man."

Of his inſinuation and flattery it is not unreaſonable to believe that the truth is told. Aſcham, in his elegant deſcription of thoſe whom in modern language we term Wits, ſays, that they are *open flatterers, and privy mockers*. Waller ſhewed a little of both, when, upon ſight of the Ducheſs of Newcaſtle's verſes on the death of a Stag, he declared that he would give all his own compoſitions to have written them; and, being charged with the exorbitance of his adulation, anſwered, that "nothing was too much to be given, "that a lady might be ſaved from the diſgrace of "ſuch a vile performance." This, however, was no very miſchievous or very unuſual deviation from truth: had his hypocriſy been confined to ſuch tranſactions, he might have been forgiven, though not praiſed; for who forbears to flatter an author or a lady?

Of the laxity of his political principles, and the weakneſs of his reſolution, he experienced the natural effect, by loſing the eſteem of every party. From Cromwell he had only his recall; and from Charles the Second, who delighted in his company, he obtained only the pardon of his relation Hampden, and the ſafety of Hampden's ſon.

As far as conjecture can be made from the whole of his writing, and his conduct, he was habitually and deliberately a friend to monarchy. His

leviation towards democracy proceeded from his connection with Hampden, for whoſe ſake he proſecuted Crawley with great bitterneſs: and the invective which he pronounced on that occaſion was ſo popular, that twenty thouſand copies are ſaid by his biographer to have been ſold in one day.

It is confeſſed that his faults ſtill left him many friends, at leaſt many companions. His convivial power of pleaſing is univerſally acknowledged; but thoſe who converſed with him intimately, found him not only paſſionate, eſpecially in his old age, but reſentful; ſo that the interpoſition of friends was ſometimes neceſſary.

His wit and his poetry naturally connected him with the polite writers of his time: he was joined with Lord Buckhurſt in the tranſlation of Corneille's Pompey; and is ſaid to have added his help to that of Cowley in the original draught of the Rehearſal.

The care of his fortune, which Clarendon imputes to him in a degree little leſs than criminal, was either not conſtant or not ſucceſsful; for, having inherited a patrimony of three thouſand five hundred pounds a year in the time of James the Firſt, and augmented it at leaſt by one wealthy marriage, he left, about the time of the Revolution, an income of not more than twelve or thirteen hundred; which, when the different value of money is reckoned, will be found perhaps not more than a fourth part of what he once poſſeſſed.

Of this diminution, part was the conſequence of the gifts which he was forced to ſcatter, and the fine which he was condemned to pay at the detection of his plot; and if his eſtate, as is related in his Life, was ſequeſtered, he had probably contracted debts

when he lived in exile; for we are told, that at Paris he lived in ſplendor, and was the only Engliſhman, except the Lord St. Albans, that kept a table.

His unlucky plot compelled him to ſell a thouſand a year; of the waſte of the reſt there is no account, except that he is confeſſed by his biographer to have been a bad œconomiſt. He ſeems to have deviated from the common practice; to have been a hoarder in his firſt years, and a ſquanderer in his laſt.

Of his courſe of ſtudies, or choice of books, nothing is known more than that he profeſſed himſelf unable to read Chapman's tranſlation of Homer without rapture. His opinion concerning the duty of a poet is contained in his declaration, that "he would blot from his works "any line that did not contain ſome motive to virtue."

THE characters, by which Waller intended to diſtinguiſh his writings, are ſpritelineſs and dignity; in his ſmaller pieces, he endeavours to be gay; in the larger, to be great. Of his airy and light productions, the chief ſource is gallantry, that attentive reverence of female excellence, which has deſcended to us from the Gothic ages. As his poems are commonly occaſional, and his addreſſes perſonal, he was not ſo liberally ſupplied with grand as with ſoft images; for beauty is more eaſily found than magnanimity.

The delicacy, which he cultivated, reſtrains him to a certain nicety and caution, even when he writes upon the ſlighteſt matter. He has, therefore, in his whole volume nothing burleſque, and ſeldom any thing ludicrous or familiar. He ſeems always to do his beſt; though his ſubjects are often unworthy of his care.

It

It is not eaſy to think without ſome contempt on an author, who is growing illuſtrious in his own opinion by verſes, at one time, "To a Lady, who can do "any thing, but ſleep, when ſhe pleaſes." At another, "To a Lady, who can ſleep, when ſhe pleaſes." Now, "To a Lady, on her paſſing through a crowd "of people." Then, "On a braid of divers colours "woven by four Ladies:" "On a tree cut in paper:" or, "To a Lady, from whom he received the copy "of verſes on the paper-tree, which, for many years "had been miſſing."

Genius now and then produces a lucky trifle. We ſtill read the *Dove* of Anacreon, and *Sparrow* of Catullus; and a writer naturally pleaſes himſelf with a performance, which owes nothing to the ſubject. But compoſitions merely pretty have the fate of other pretty things, and are quitted in time for ſomething uſeful; they are flowers fragrant and fair, but of ſhort duration; or they are bloſſoms to be valued only as they foretell fruits.

Among Waller's little poems are ſome, which their excellency ought to ſecure from oblivion; as, *To Amoret*, comparing the different modes of regard with which he looks on her and *Sacharissa*; and the verſes *On Love*, that begin, *Anger in haſty words or blows.*

In others he is not equally ſucceſsful; ſometimes his thoughts are deficient, and ſometimes his expreſſion.

The numbers are not always muſical; as,

Fair Venus, in thy ſoft arms
The god of rage confine;
For thy whiſpers are the charms
Which only can divert his fierce deſign.

What though he frown, and to tumult do incline,
Thou the flame
Kindled in his breaſt canſt tame
With that ſnow which unmelted lies on thine.

He ſeldom indeed fetches an amorous ſentiment from the depths of ſcience; his thoughts are for the moſt part eaſily underſtood, and his images ſuch as the ſuperficies of nature readily ſupplies; he has a juſt claim to popularity, becauſe he writes to common degrees of knowledge, and is free at leaſt from philoſophical pedantry, unleſs perhaps the end of a ſong *to the Sun* may be excepted, in which he is too much a Copernican. To which may be added the ſimile of the *Palm* in the verſes *on her paſſing through a crowd*; and a line in a more ſerious poem on the *Reſtoration*, about vipers and treacle, which can only be underſtood by thoſe who happen to know the compoſition of the *Theriaca*.

His thoughts are ſometimes hyperbolical, and his images unnatural:

——The plants admire,
No leſs than thoſe of old did Orpheus' lyre;
If ſhe ſit down, with tops all tow'rds her bow'd;
They round about her into arbours crowd:
Or if ſhe walks, in even ranks they ſtand,
Like ſome well-marſhal'd and obſequious band.

In another place;

While in the park I ſing, the liſtening deer
Attend my paſſion, and forget to fear:
When to the beeches I report my flame,
They bow their heads, as if they felt the ſame.
To gods appealing, when I reach their bowers,
With loud complaints they anſwer me in ſhowers.

To

To thee a wild and cruel ſoul is given,
More deaf than trees, and prouder than the heaven!

On the head of a Stag:

O fertile head! which every year
Could ſuch a crop of wonder bear!
The teeming earth did never bring
So ſoon, ſo hard, ſo huge a thing:
Which might it never have been caſt,
Each year's growth added to the laſt,
Theſe lofty branches had ſupply'd
The Earth's bold ſon's prodigious pride:
Heaven with theſe engines had been ſcal'd,
When mountains heap'd on mountains fail'd.

Sometimes having ſucceeded in the firſt part, he makes a feeble concluſion. In the ſong of "Sacha-"riſſa's and Amoret's Friendſhip," the two laſt ſtanzas ought to have been omitted.

His images of gallantry are not always in the higheſt degree delicate.

Then ſhall my love this doubt diſplace,
And gain ſuch truſt that I may come
And banquet ſometimes on thy face,
But make my conſtant meals at home.

Some applications may be thought too remote and unconſequential: as in the verſes on the *Lady dancing:*

The ſun in figures ſuch as theſe,
Joys with the moon to play:
To the ſweet ſtrains they advance,
Which do reſult from their own ſpheres;
As this nymph's dance
Moves with the numbers which ſhe hears.

Sometimes a thought, which might perhaps fill a diſtich, is expanded and attenuated till it grows weak and almoſt evaneſcent.

Chloris! ſince firſt our calm of peace
Was frighted hence, this good we find,
Your favours with your fears increaſe,
And growing miſchiefs make you kind.
So the fair tree, which ſtill preſerves
Her fruit, and ſtate, while no wind blows,
In ſtorms from that uprightneſs ſwerves;
And the glad earth about her ſtrows
With treaſure from her yielding boughs.

His images are not always diſtinct; as, in the following paſſage, he confounds *Love* as a perſon with *love* as a paſſion:

Some other nymphs, with colours faint,
And pencil ſlow, may Cupid paint,
And a weak heart in time deſtroy;
She has a ſtamp, and prints the Boy:
Can, with a ſingle look, inflame
The coldeſt breaſt, the rudeſt tame.

His ſallies of caſual flattery are ſometimes elegant and happy, as that *in return for the Silver Pen*; and ſometimes empty and trifling, as that *upon the Card torn by the Queen*. There are a few lines *written in the Dutcheſs's Taſſo*, which he is ſaid by Fenton to have kept a ſummer under correction. It happened to Waller, as to others, that his ſucceſs was not always in proportion to his labour.

Of theſe petty compoſitions, neither the beauties nor the faults deſerve much attention. The amorous verſes have this to recommend them, that they are leſs hyperbolical than thoſe of ſome other poets. Waller is not always at the laſt gaſp; he does not die of a frown, nor live upon a ſmile. There is, however, too much love, and too many trifles. Little things are made too important; and the Empire of Beauty is re-

preſented

preſented as exerting its influence further than can be allowed by the multiplicity of human paſſions, and the variety of human wants. Such books, therefore, may be conſidered as ſhewing the world under a falſe appearance, and, ſo far as they obtain credit from the young and unexperienced, as miſleading expectation, and miſguiding practice.

Of his nobler and more weighty performances, the greater part is panegyrical; for of praiſe he was very laviſh, as is obſerved by his imitator, Lord Lanſdown:

> No ſatyr ſtalks within the hallow'd ground,
> But queens and heroines, kings and gods abound;
> Glory and arms and love are all the ſound.

In the firſt poem, on the danger of the Prince on the coaſt of Spain, there is a puerile and ridiculous mention of Arion at the beginning; and the laſt paragraph, on the *Cable*, is in part ridiculouſly mean, and in part ridiculouſly tumid. The poem, however, is ſuch as may be juſtly praiſed, without much allowance for the ſtate of our poetry and language at that time.

The two next poems are upon the King's *behaviour at the death of* Buckingham, and upon his *Navy*.

He has, in the firſt, uſed the pagan deities with great propriety:

> 'Twas want of ſuch a precedent as this
> Made the old heathen frame their gods amiſs.

In the poem on the Navy, thoſe lines are very noble, which ſuppoſe the King's power ſecure againſt a ſecond Deluge; ſo noble, that it were almoſt criminal to remark the miſtake of *centre* for *ſurface*, or to ſay that the empire of the ſea would be worth little if it were not that the waters terminate in land.

The poem upon Sallee has forcible ſentiments; but the concluſion is feeble. That on the Repairs of St. Paul's has ſomething vulgar and obvious; ſuch as the mention of Amphion; and ſomething violent and harſh, as

> So all our minds with his conſpire to grace
> The Gentiles' great apoſtle, and deface
> Thoſe ſtate-obſcuring ſheds, that like a chain
> Seem'd to confine, and fetter him again:
> Which the glad ſaint ſhakes off at his command,
> As once the viper from his ſacred hand.
> So joys the aged oak, when we divide
> The creeping ivy from his injur'd ſide.

Of the two laſt couplets, the firſt is extravagant, and the ſecond mean.

His praiſe of the Queen is too much exaggerated; and the thought, that ſhe "ſaves lovers, by cutting "off hope, as gangrenes are cured by lopping the "limb," preſents nothing to the mind but diſguſt and horror.

Of the *Battle of the Summer Iſlands*, it ſeems not eaſy to ſay whether it is intended to raiſe terror or merriment. The beginning is too ſplendid for jeſt, and the concluſion too light for ſerioufneſs. The verſification is ſtudied, the ſcenes are diligently diſplayed, and the images artfully amplified; but as it ends neither in joy nor ſorrow, it will ſcarcely be read a ſecond time.

1. *Panegyrick* upon Cromwell has obtained from the publick a very liberal dividend of praiſe, which however cannot be ſaid to have been unjuſtly laviſhed; for ſuch a ſeries of verſes had rarely appeared before in the Engliſh language. Of the lines ſome are grand, ſome are graceful, and all are muſical. There is now and

nd then a feeble verſe, or a trifling thought; but its reat fault is the choice of its hero.

The poem of *The War with Spain* begins with lines nore vigorous and ſtriking than Waller is accuſtomed o produce. The ſucceeding parts are variegated with ietter paſſages and worſe. There is ſomething too far-etched in the compariſon of the Spaniards drawing he Engliſh on, by ſaluting St. Lucar with cannon, *to mbs awakening the lion by bleating*. The fate of the Marquis and his Lady, who were burnt in their ſhip, would have moved more, had the poet not made him lie like the Phœnix, becauſe he had ſpices about him, or expreſſed their affection and their end by a conceit t once falſe and vulgar:

> Alive, in equal flames of love they burn'd,
> And now together are to aſhes turn'd.

The verſes to Charles, on his Return, were doubtleſs ntended to counterbalance the panegyric on Cromwell. f it has been thought inferior to that with which it is aturally compared, the cauſe of its deficience has been lready remarked.

The remaining pieces it is not neceſſary to examine ingly. They muſt be ſuppoſed to have faults and eauties of the ſame kind with the reſt. The Sacred 'oems, however, deſerve particular regard; they were he work of Waller's declining life, of thoſe hours in hich he looked upon the fame and the folly of the ime paſt with the ſentiments which his great prede-eſſor Petrarch bequeathed to poſterity, upon his re-iew of that love and poetry which have given him nmortality.

That natural jealouſy which makes every man un-illing to allow much excellence in another, always

produces

produces a diſpoſition to believe that the mind grows old with the body; and that he, whom we are now forced to confeſs ſuperior, is haſtening daily to a level with ourſelves. By delighting to think this of the living, we learn to think it of the dead; and Fenton, with all his kindneſs for Waller, has the luck to mark the exact time when his genius paſſed the zenith, which he places at his fifty-fifth year. This is to allot the mind but a ſmall portion. Intellectual decay is doubtleſs not uncommon; but it ſeems not to be univerſal. Newton was in his eighty-fifth year improving his Chronology, a few days before his death; and Waller appears not, in my opinion, to have loſt at eighty-two any part of his poetical power.

His Sacred Poems do not pleaſe like ſome of his other works; but before the fatal fifty-five, had he written on the ſame ſubjects, his ſucceſs would hardly have been better*.

It has been the frequent lamentation of good men, that verſe has been too little applied to the purpoſes of worſhip, and many attempts have been made to animate devotion by pious poetry; that they have very ſeldom attained their end is ſufficiently known, and it may not be improper to enquire why they have miſcarried.

Let no pious ear be offended if I advance, in oppoſition to many authorities, that poetical devotion cannot often pleaſe. The doctrines of religion may indeed

* Theſe were written, as Fenton aſſerts, after the author had attained the age of fourteore, and that on the Fear of God at his age of eighty-two. It was given by him to Thomas Elwood, the [illegible] of his at Coleſhill, mentioned in a preceding note on the life of Milton, and ſeems to have firſt appeared in that edition of Waller's poems which contains his life.

defended in a didactick poem; and he who has the ppy power of arguing in verſe, will not loſe it beuſe his ſubject is ſacred. A poet may deſcribe the auty and the grandeur of Nature, the flowers of the ring, and the harveſts of Autumn, the viciſſitudes the Tide, and the revolutions of the Sky, and praiſe e Maker for his works in lines which no reader ſhall y aſide. The ſubject of the diſputation is not piety, t the motives to piety; that of the deſcription is not od, but the works of God.

Contemplative piety, or the intercourſe between God d the human ſoul, cannot be poetical. Man admitd to implore the mercy of his Creator, and plead the erits of his Redeemer, is already in a higher ſtate an poetry can confer.

The eſſence of poetry is invention; ſuch invention , by producing ſomething unexpected, ſurpriſes and elights. The topicks of devotion are few, and being w are univerſally known; but, few as they are, they n be made no more; they can receive no grace from ovelty of ſentiment, and very little from novelty of preſſion.

Poetry pleaſes by exhibiting an idea more grateful the mind than things themſelves afford. This effect roceeds from the diſplay of thoſe parts of nature hich attract, and the concealment of thoſe which pel the imagination: but religion muſt be ſhewn as is; ſuppreſſion and addition equally corrupt it; and ch as it is, it is known already.

From poetry the reader juſtly expects, and from ood poetry always obtains, the enlargement of his omprehenſion and elevation of his fancy; but this is rely to be hoped by Chriſtians from metrical devo-

tion. Whatever is great, deſireable, or tremendous, is compriſed in the name of the Supreme Being. Omnipotence cannot be exalted; Infinity cannot be amplified; Perfection cannot be improved.

The employments of pious meditation are Faith, Thankſgiving, Repentance, and Supplication. Faith, invariably uniform, cannot be inveſted by fancy with decorations. Thankſgiving, the moſt joyful of all holy effuſions, yet addreſſed to a Being without paſſions, is confined to a few modes, and is to be felt rather than expreſſed. Repentance trembling in the preſence of the judge, is not at leiſure for cadences and epithets. Supplication of man to man may diffuſe itſelf through many topicks of perſuaſion; but ſupplication to God can only cry for mercy.

Of ſentiments purely religious, it will be found that the moſt ſimple expreſſion is the moſt ſublime. Poetry loſes its luſtre and its power, becauſe it is applied to the decoration of ſomething more excellent than itſelf. All that pious verſe can do is to help the memory, and delight the ear, and for theſe purpoſes it may be very uſeful; but it ſupplies nothing to the mind. The ideas of Chriſtian Theology are too ſimple for eloquence, too ſacred for fiction, and too majeſtick for ornament; to recommend them by tropes and figures, is to magnify by a concave mirror the ſidereal hemiſphere.

As much of Waller's reputation was owing to the ſoftneſs and ſmoothneſs of his Numbers; it is proper to conſider thoſe minute particulars to which a verſifyer muſt attend.

He certainly very much excelled in ſmoothneſs moſt of the writers who were living when his poetry commenced.

nenced. The Poets of Elizabeth had attained an art of modulation, which was afterwards neglected or forgotten. Fairfax was acknowledged by him as his model; and he might have ſtudied with advantage the poem of Davis, which, though merely philoſophical, yet ſeldom leaves the ear ungratified.

But he was rather ſmooth than ſtrong; of *the full reſounding line*, which Pope attributes to Dryden, he has given very few examples. The critical deciſion has given the praiſe of ſtrength to Denham, and of ſweetneſs to Waller.

His excellence of verſification has ſome abatements. He uſes the expletive *do* very frequently; and though he uſed to ſee it almoſt univerſally ejected, was not more careful to avoid it in his laſt compoſitions than in his firſt. Praiſe had given him confidence; and finding the world ſatisfied, he ſatisfied himſelf.

His rhymes are ſometimes weak words: *ſo* is found to make the rhyme twice in ten lines, and occurs often as a rhyme through his book.

His double rhymes, in heroick verſe, have been cenſured by Mr. Phillips, who was his rival in the tranſlation of Corneille's Pompey; and more faults might be found, were not the enquiry below attention.

He ſometimes uſes the obſolete termination of verbs, as *waxeth*, *affecteth*; and ſometimes retains the final ſyllable of the preterite, as *amazed*, *ſuppoſed*; of which I know not whether it is not to the detriment of our language that we have totally rejected them.

Of triplets he is ſparing; but he did not wholly forbear them: of an Alexandrine he has given no example.

The general character of his poetry is elegance and gaiety. He is never pathetick, and very rarely ſublime. He ſeems neither to have had a mind much elevated by nature, nor amplified by learning. His thoughts are ſuch as a liberal converſation and large acquaintance with life would eaſily ſupply. They had however then, perhaps, that grace of novelty, which they are now often ſuppoſed to want by thoſe who, having already found them in later books, do not know or enquire who produced them firſt. This treatment is unjuſt. Let not the original author loſe by his imitators.

Praiſe however ſhould be due before it is given. The author of Waller's Life aſcribes to him the firſt practice, of what Erythræus and ſome late critics call *Alliteration*, of uſing in the ſame verſe many words beginning with the ſame letter. But this knack, whatever be its value, was ſo frequent among early writers, that Gaſcoign, a writer of the ſixteenth century, warns the young poet againſt affecting it; Shakſpeare in the *Midſummer Night's Dream* is ſuppoſed to ridicule it; and in another play the ſonnet of Holofernes fully diſplays it.

He borrows too many of his ſentiments and illuſtrations from the old Mythology, for which it is vain to plead the example of ancient poets: the deities which they introduced ſo frequently, were conſidered as realities, ſo far as to be received by the imagination, whatever ſober reaſon might even then determine. But of theſe images time has tarniſhed the ſplendor. A fiction, not only detected but deſpiſed, can never afford a ſolid baſis to any poſition, though ſometimes it may furniſh a tranſient alluſion, or ſlight illuſtration. No modern

modern monarch can be much exalted by hearing that, as Hercules had had his *club*, he has his *navy*.

But of the praiſe of Waller, though much may be taken away, much will remain; for it cannot be denied that he added ſomething to our elegance of diction, and ſomething to our propriety of thought; and to him may be applied what Taſſo ſaid, with equal ſpirit and juſtice of himſelf and Guarini, when, having peruſed the *Paſtor Fido*, he cried out, "If he had not "read *Aminta*, he had not excelled it."

AS Waller profeſſed himſelf to have learned the art of verſification from Fairfax, it has been thought proper to ſubjoin a ſpecimen of his work, which, after Mr. Hoole's tranſlation, will perhaps not be ſoon reprinted. By knowing the ſtate in which Waller found our poetry, the reader may judge how much he improved it.

1.

Erminiaes ſteed (this while) his miſtreſſe bore
Through forreſts thicke among the ſhadie treene,
Her feeble hand the bridle raines forlore,
Halfe in a ſwoune ſhe was for feare I weene;
But her flit courſer ſpared nere the more,
To beare her through the deſart woods unſeene
Of her ſtrong foes, that chas'd her through the plaine,
And ſtill purſu'd, but ſtill purſu'd in vaine.

2.

Like as the wearie hounds at laſt retire,
Windleſſe, diſpleaſed, from the fruitleſſe chace,
When the ſlie beaſt Tapiſht in buſh and brire,
No art nor paines can rowſe out of his place:
The Chriſtian knights ſo full of ſhame and ire
Returned backe, with faint and wearie pace!

Yet

Yet ſtill the fearfull Dame fled, ſwift as winde,
Nor euer ſtaid, nor euer lookt behinde.

3.

Through thicke and thinne, all night, all day, ſhe drived,
Withouten comfort, companie or guide,
Her plaints and teares with euery thought reuiued,
She heard and ſaw her greefes, but nought beſide.
But when the ſunne his burning chariot diued
In Thetis wauye, and wearie teame vntide,
On Iordans ſandie banks her courſe ſhe ſtaid,
At laſt, there downe ſhe light, and downe ſhe laid.

4.

Her teares, her drinke; her food, her ſorrowings,
This was her diet that vnhappie night:
But ſleepe (that ſweet repoſe and quiet brings)
To eaſe the greefes of diſcontented wight,
Spread foorth his tender, ſoft, and nimble wings,
In his dull armes foulding the virgin bright;
And loue, his mother, and the graces kept
Strong watch and warde, while this faire Ladie ſlept.

5.

The birds awakte her with their morning ſong,
Their warbling muſicke pearſt her tender eare,
The murmuring brookes and whiſtling windes among
The ratling boughes, and leaues, their parts did beare;
Her eies vnclos'd beheld the groues along
Of ſwaines and ſhepherd groomes, that dwellings weare;
And that ſweet noiſe, birds, winds, and waters ſent,
Prouokte againe the virgin to lament.

6.

Her plaints were interrupted with a ſound,
That ſeem'd from thickeſt buſhes to proceed,
Some iolly ſhepherd ſung a luſtie round,
And to his voice had tun'd his oaten reed;

Thither

Thither ſhe went, an old man there ſhe found,
(At whoſe right hand his little flock did feed)
Sat making baſkets, his three ſonnes among,
That learn'd their fathers art, and learn'd his ſong.

7.

Beholding one in ſhining armes appeare
The ſeelie man and his were ſore diſmaid;
But ſweet Erminia comforted their feare,
Her ventall vp, her viſage open laid,
You happie folke, of heau'n beloued deare,
Work on (quoth ſhe) vpon your harmleſſe traid,
Theſe dreadfull armes I beare no warfare bring
To your ſweet toile, nor thoſe ſweet tunes you ſing.

8.

But father, ſince this land, theſe townes and towres,
Deſtroied are with ſword, with fire and ſpoile,
How may it be unhurt, that you and yours
In ſafetie thus, applie your harmleſſe toile?
My ſonne (quoth he) this pore eſtate of ours
Is euer ſafe from ſtorme of warlike broile;
This wilderneſſee doth vs in ſafetie keepe,
No thundring drum, no trumpet breakes our ſleepe.

9.

Haply iuſt heau'ns defence and ſhield of right,
Doth loue the innocence of ſimple ſwains,
The thunderbolts on higheſt mountains light,
And ſeld or neuer ſtrike the lower plaines:
So kings haue cauſe to feare *Bellonaes* might,
Not they whoſe ſweat and toile their dinner gaines,
Nor ever greedie ſoldier was entiſed
By pouertie, neglected and deſpiſed.

10.

O pouertie, cheſe of the heau'nly brood,
Dearer to me than wealth or kingly crowne!

No wiſh for honour, thirſt of others good,
Can moue my hart, contented with mine owne:
We quench our thirſt with water of this flood,
Nor fear we poiſon ſhould therein be throwne:
Theſe little flocks of ſheepe and tender goates
Giue milke for food, and wooll to make us coates.

11.

We little wiſh, we need but little wealth,
From cold and hunger vs to cloath and feed;
Theſe are my ſonnes, their care perſerues from ſtealth
Their fathers flocks, nor ſervants moe I need:
Amid theſe groues I walke oft for my health,
And to the fiſhes, birds, and beaſtes giue heed,
How they are fed, in forreſt, ſpring and lake,
And their contentment for enſample take.

12.

Time was (for each one hath his doting time,
Theſe ſiluer locks were golden treſſes than)
That countrie life I hated as a crime,
And from the foreſts ſweet contentment ran,
To Memphis ſtately pallace would I clime,
And there became the mightie Caliphes man,
And though I but a ſimple gardner weare,
Yet could I marke abuſes, ſee and heare,

13.

Entiſed on with hope of future gaine,
I ſuffred long what did my ſoule diſpleaſe;
But when my youth was ſpent, my hope was vaine,
I felt my native ſtrength at laſt decreaſe;
I gan my loſſe of luſtie yeeres complaine,
And wiſht I had enjoy'd the countries peace;
I bod the court farewell, and with content
My later age here have I quiet ſpent.

14.

While thus he ſpake, Erminia huſht and ſtill
His wife diſcourſes heard, with great attention,
His ſpeeches graue thoſe idle fancies kill,
Which in her troubled ſoule bred ſuch diſſention;
After much thought reformed was her will,
Within thoſe woods to dwell was her intention,
Till fortune ſhould occaſion new afford,
To turne her home to her deſired Lord.

15.

She ſaid therefore, O ſhepherd fortunate!
That troubles ſome didſt whilom feele and proue,
Yet liueſt now in this contented ſtate,
Let my miſhap thy thoughts to pitie moue,
To entertaine me as a willing mate
In ſhepherds life, which I admire and loue;
Within theſe pleaſant groues perchance my hart,
Of her diſcomforts, may vnload ſome part.

16.

If gold or wealth of moſt eſteemed deare,
If iewels rich, thou diddeſt hold in priſe,
Such ſtore thereof, ſuch plentie haue I ſeen,
As to a greedie minde might well ſuffice:
With that downe trickled many a ſiluer teare,
Two chriſtall ſtreames fell from her watrie eies;
Part of her ſad misfortunes than ſhe told,
And wept, and with her wept that ſhepherd old.

17.

With ſpeeches kinde, he gan the virgin deare
Towards his cottage gently home to guide;
His aged wife there made her homely cheare,
Yet welcomde her, and plaſt her by her ſide.
The Princeſſe dond a poore paſtoraes geare,
A kerchiefe courſe vpon her head ſhe tide;

But yet her geſtures and her lookes (I geſſe)
Were ſuch, as ill beſeem'd a ſhepherdeſſe.

18.

Not thoſe rude garments could obſcure, and hide,
The heau'nly beautie of her angels face,
Nor was her princely ofspring damnifide,
Or ought diſparag'de, by thoſe labours bace;
Her little flocks to paſture would ſhe guide,
And milke her goates, and in their folds them place,
Both cheeſe and butter could ſhe make, and frame
Her ſelfe to pleaſe the ſhepherd and his dame.

POMFRET.

OF Mr. JOHN POMFRET nothing is known but from a ſlight and confuſed account prefixed to his poems by a nameleſs friend; who relates, that he was the ſon of the Rev. Mr. Pomfret, rector of Luton in Bedfordſhire; that he was bred at Cambridge *; entered into orders, and was rector of Malden in Bedfordſhire, and might have riſen in the Church; but that, when he applied to Dr. Compton, biſhop of London, for inſtitution to a living of conſiderable value, to which he had been preſented, he found a troubleſome obſtruction raiſed by a malicious interpretation of ſome paſſage in his *Choice*; from which it was inferred, that he conſidered happineſs as more likely to be found in the company of a miſtreſs than of a wife †.

This

* He was of Queen's College there, and, by the Univerſity regiſter, appears to have taken his Bachelor's degree in 1684, and his Maſter's in 1698.

† The paſſage here meant, is the following:

And as I near approach'd the verge of life,
Some kind relation (for I'd have no wife)

 Should

This reproach was eaſily obliterated: for it had happened to Pomfret as to all other men who plan ſchemes of life; he had departed from his purpoſe, and was then married.

The malice of his enemies had however a very fatal conſequence: the delay conſtrained his attendance in London, where he caught the ſmall-pox, and died in 1703, in the thirty-ſixth year of his age.

He publiſhed his poems in 1699; and has been always the favourite of that claſs of readers, who, without vanity or criticiſm, ſeek only their own amuſement.

His *Choice* exhibits a ſyſtem of life adapted to common notions, and equal to common expectations; ſuch a ſtate as affords plenty and tranquillity, without excluſion of intellectual pleaſures. Perhaps no compoſition in our language has been oftener peruſed than Pomfret's *Choice*.

Should take upon him all my worldly care,
While I did for a better ſtate prepare.

* If my memory does not greatly miſlead me, in the earlier editions the laſt line but one above-cited ſtood thus:

Should take upon *her* all my worldly care.

This has been frequently mentioned as the only paſſage in the poem that could obſtruct his inſtitution, and the interpretation thereof is here, as elſewhere, ſtigmatiſed as malicious, and the rather, for that at the time of his application to the biſhop he was married; a circumſtance that reſolves the ſentiment no otherwiſe than by ſhewing that the author had changed his opinion.

But the preceding part of the poem contains a wiſh to have near him an "obliging fair one to converſe with, conſtant to herſelf and "to him, whoſe converſation ſhould inſpire him with new joys, and "who ſhould be laid, even by envy, to go the leaſt of womankind "aſtray." The lines are too filly to be worth inſerting, but, if not culpable of a bad conſtruction, they muſt be owned to be at leaſt ambiguous.

In his other poems there is an eaſy volubility; the pleaſure of ſmooth metre is afforded to the ear, and the mind is not oppreſſed with ponderous or entangled with intricate ſentiment. He pleaſes many, and he who pleaſes many muſt have ſome ſpecies of merit.

*** Whoever will be at the pains of comparing the moſt admired of Pomfret's poems, his Choice, with Dr. Pope's Wiſh, will be convinced how much the manly ſenſe of the latter outweighs the puerile inanity of the former. Of Pomfret's Poems, few have ever been readers but the illiterate, and ſuch as are delighted with trite ſentiments and vulgar imagery; and as theſe are the moſt numerous of thoſe that can read at all, it is no wonder that by ſuch they have been often peruſed.

DORSET.

OF the Earl of Dorſet the character has been drawn ſo largely and ſo elegantly by Prior, to whom he was familiarly known, that nothing can be added by a caſual hand; and, as its author is ſo generally read, it would be uſeleſs officiouſneſs to tranſcribe it.

Charles Sackville was born January 24, 1637. Having been educated under a private tutor, he travelled into Italy, and returned a little before the Reſtoration. He was choſen into the firſt parliament that was called, for Eaſt Grinſtead in Suſſex, and ſoon became a favourite of Charles the Second; but undertook no publick employment, being too eager of the riotous and licentious pleaſures which young men of high rank, who aſpired to be thought wits, at that time imagined themſelves intitled to indulge.

One of theſe frolicks has, by the induſtry of Wood, come down to poſterity. Sackville, who was then Lord Buckhurſt, with Sir Charles Sedley and Sir Thomas Ogle, got drunk at the Cock in Bow-ſtreet by Covent garden, and, going into the balcony, ex-

poſed

poſed themſelves to the populace in very indecent poſtures. At laſt, as they grew warmer, Sedley ſtood forth naked, and harangued the populace in ſuch profane language, that the publick indignation was awakened; the crowd attempted to force the door, and, being repulſed, drove in the performers with ſtones, and broke the windows of the houſe *.

For this miſdemeanor they were indicted, and Sedley was fined five hundred pounds: what was the ſentence of the others is not known. Sedley employed Killigrew and another to procure a remiſſion from the king; but (mark the friendſhip of the diſſolute!) they begged the fine for themſelves, and exacted it to the laſt groat.

In 1665, Lord Buckhurſt attended the Duke of York as a volunteer in the Dutch war; and was in the battle of June 3, when eighteen great Dutch ſhips were taken, fourteen others were deſtroyed, and Opdam the admiral, who engaged the Duke, was blown up beſide him, with all his crew.

On the day before the battle, he is ſaid to have compoſed the celebrated ſong, *To all you Ladies now at land*, with equal tranquillity of mind and promptitude of wit. Seldom any ſplendid ſtory is wholly true. I have heard from the late earl of Orrery, who was likely to have good hereditary intelligence, that Lord Buckhurſt had been a week employed upon it, and only retouched or finiſhed it on the memorable evening. But even this, whatever it may ſubſtract from his facility, leaves him his courage.

* The particulars of this ſhameful tranſaction, and the impudent behaviour of Sedley to the Lord Chief Juſtice Hyde, at the time of pronouncing ſentence, are related in the "Athen. Oxon." II. 1100.

He

He was ſoon after made a gentleman of the bedchamber, and ſent on ſhort embaſſies to France.

In 1674, the eſtate of his uncle James Cranfield, Earl of Middleſex, came to him by its owner's death, and the title was conferred on him the year after. In 1677, he became, by the death of his father, Earl of Dorſet, and inherited the eſtate of his family.

In 1684, having buried his firſt wife, of the family of Bagot, who left him no child, he married a daughter of the Earl of Northampton, celebrated both for beauty and underſtanding.

He received ſome favourable notice from King James; but ſoon found it neceſſary to oppoſe the violence of his innovations, and with ſome other Lords appeared in Weſtminſter-hall to countenance the biſhops at their trial.

As enormities grew every day leſs ſupportable, he found it neceſſary to concur in the Revolution. He was one of thoſe Lords who ſat every day in council to preſerve the public peace, after the king's departure; and, what is not the moſt illuſtrious action of his life, was employed to conduct the Princeſs Anne to Nottingham with a guard, ſuch as might alarm the populace, as they paſſed, with falſe apprehenſions of her danger. Whatever end may be deſigned, there is always ſomething deſpicable in a trick.

He became, as may be eaſily ſuppoſed, a favourite of King William, who, the day after his acceſſion, made him lord chamberlain of the houſehold, and gave him afterwards the garter. He happened to be among thoſe that were toſſed with the King in an open boat ſixteen hours, in very rough and cold weather,

on the coaſt of Holland. His health afterwards declined; and on January 19, 1705-6, he died at Bath.

He was a man whoſe elegance and judgement were univerſally confeſſed, and whoſe bounty to the learned and witty was generally known. To the indulgent affection of the publick, Lord Rocheſter bore ample teſtimony in this remark: *I know not how it is, but* Lord Buckhurſt *may do what he will, yet is never in the wrong.*

If ſuch a man attempted poetry, we cannot wonder that his works were praiſed. Dryden, whom, if Prior tells truth, he diſtinguiſhed by his beneficence, and who laviſhed his blandiſhments on thoſe who are not known to have ſo well deſerved them, undertaking to produce authors of our own country ſuperior to thoſe of antiquity, ſays, *I would inſtance your Lordſhip in ſatire, and Shakſpeare in tragedy.* Would it be imagined that, of this rival to antiquity, all the ſatires were little perſonal invectives, and that his longeſt compoſition was a ſong of eleven ſtanzas?

The blame, however, of this exaggerated praiſe falls on the encomiaſt, not upon the author; whoſe performances are, what they pretend to be, the effuſions of a man of wit; gay, vigorous, and airy. His verſes to Howard ſhew great fertility of mind, and his *Dorinda* has been imitated by Pope.

STEPNEY.

STEPNEY.

GEORGE STEPNEY, deſcended from the Stepneys of Pendigraſt in Pembrokeſhire, was born at Weſtminſter in 1663. Of his father's condition or fortune we have no account. Having received the firſt part of his education at Weſtminſter, where he paſſed ſix years in the College, he went at nineteen to Cambridge *, where he continued a friendſhip begun at ſchool with Mr. Montague, afterwards Earl of Halifax. They came to London together, and are ſaid to have been invited into publick life by the Duke of Dorſet.

His qualifications recommended him to many foreign employments, ſo that his time ſeems to have been ſpent in negotiations. In 1692 he was ſent envoy to the Elector of Brandenburgh; in 1693 to the Imperial Court; in 1694 to the Elector of Saxony; in

* He was entered of Trinity College, and took his Maſter's degree in 1689.

596 to the Electors of Mentz and Cologne, and the ongreſs at Francfort; in 1698 a ſecond time to Brandenburgh; in 1699 to the King of Poland; in 1701 gain to the Emperor; and in 1706 to the States Geral. In 1697 he was made one of the commiſſioners trade. His life was buſy, and not long. He died 1707; and is buried in Weſtminſter-Abbey, with is epitaph, which *Jacob* tranſcribed:

H. S. E.
GEORGIUS STEPNEIUS, Armiger,
Vir
Ob Ingenii acumen,
Literarum Scientiam,
Morum Suavitatem,
Rerum Uſum,
Virorum Ampliſſimorum Conſuetudinem
Linguæ, Styli, ac Vitæ Elegantiam,
Præclara Officia cum Britanniæ tum Europæ
præſtita,
Sua ætate multum celebratus,
Apud poſteros ſemper celebrandus;
Plurimas Legationes obiit
Ea Fide, Diligentia, ac Felicitate,
Ut Auguſtiſſimorum Principum
Gulielmi & Annæ
Spem in illo repoſitam
Nunquam feſellerit,
Haud raro ſuperaverit.
Poſt longum honorum Curſum
Brevi Temporis Spatio confectum,
Cum Naturæ parum, Famæ ſatis vixerat,
Animam ad altiora aſpirantem placide efflavit.

On the Left Hand.

G. S.
Ex Equeſtri Familia Stepneiorum,
De Pendegraſt, in Comitatu
Pembrochienſi oriundus,
Weſtmonaſterii natus eſt, A. D. 1663.
Electus in Collegium
Sancti Petri Weſtmonaſt. A. 1676.
Sancti Trinitatis Cantab. 1682.
Conſiliariorum quibus Commercii
Cura commiſſa eſt 1697.
Chelſeiæ mortuus, &, comitante
Magna Procerum
Frequentia, huc elatus, 1707.

It is reported that the juvenile compoſitions of Stepney *made grey authors bluſh.* I know not whether his poems will appear ſuch wonders to the preſent age. One cannot always eaſily find the reaſon for which the world has ſometimes conſpired to ſquander praiſe. It is not very unlikely that he wrote very early as well as he ever wrote; and the performances of youth have many favourers, becauſe the authors yet lay no claim to publick honours, and are therefore not conſidered as rivals by the diſtributors of fame.

He apparently profeſſed himſelf a poet, and added his name to thoſe of the other wits in the verſion of Juvenal; but he is a very licentious tranſlator, and does not recompenſe his neglect of the author by beauties of his own. In his original poems, now and then, a happy line may perhaps be found, and now and then a ſhort compoſition may give pleaſure. But there is, in the whole, lit-

either of the grace of wit, or the vigour of na-

J. PHILIPS.

JOHN PHILIPS was born on the 30th of December, 1676, at Bampton in Oxfordshire; of hich place his father Dr. Stephen Philips, archeacon of Salop, was minister. The first part of his lucation was domestick, after which he was sent to Vincheſter, where, as we are told by Dr. Sewel, his iographer, he was soon distinguished by the superirity of his exercises; and, what is less easily to be redited, so much endeared himself to his schoolfelows, by his civility and good-nature, that they, ithout murmur or ill-will, saw him indulged by the aster with particular immunities. It is related, that hen he was at school, he seldom mingled in play ith the other boys, but retired to his chamber; here his sovereign pleasure was to sit, hour after our, while his hair was combed by somebody, whose ervice he found means to procure *.

At

* Isaac Vossius relates that he also delighted in having his hair ombed when he could have it done by barbers or other persons skilled

At ſchool he became acquainted with the poets ancient and modern, and fixed his attention particularly on Milton.

In 1694 he entered himſelf at Chriſt-church; a college at that time in the higheſt reputation, by the tranſmiſſion of Buſby's ſcholars to the care firſt of Ald, and afterwards of *Aldrich*. Here he was diſtinguiſhed as a genius eminent among the eminent, and for friendſhip particularly intimate with Mr. Smith, the author of *Phædra and Hippolytus*. The profeſſion which he intended to follow was that of [illegible]k; and he took much delight in natural hiſtor[illegible] which botany was his favourite part.

His reputation was confi[illegible] ...is friends and to the univerſity; till about 1703 he extended it to a wider circle by the *Splendid Shilling*, which ſtruck the publick attention with a mode of writing new and unexpected.

This performance raiſed him ſo high, that when Europe reſounded with the victory of Blenheim, he was, probably with an occult oppoſition to Addiſon, employed to deliver the acclamation of the Tories. It is ſaid that he would willingly have declined the taſk,

ſkilled in the rules of proſody. Of the paſſage that contains this ridiculous fancy, the following is a tranſlation: "Many people "take delight in the rubbing of their limbs, and the combing of "their hair, but theſe exerciſes would delight much more, if the ſervants at the baths, and of the barbers, were ſo ſkilful in this art, "that they could expreſs any meaſures with their fingers. I re"member that more than once I have fallen into the hands of men "of this ſort, who could imitate any meaſure of ſongs in combing "the hair, ſo as ſometimes to expreſs very intelligibly Iambics, Tro"chees, Dactyls, &c. from whence there aroſe to me no ſmall de"light." See his Treatiſe De Poematum cantu & viribus Rythmi, Oxon. 1673, p. 92.

but

at his friends urged it upon him. It appears
: wrote this poem at the houſe of Mr. St. John.
heim was publiſhed in 1705. The next year
ed his greateſt work, the poem upon *Cider*, in
oks; which was received with loud praiſes, and
ued long to be read, as an imitation of Virgil's
, which needed not ſhun the preſence of the
l.

then grew probably more confident of his own
s, and began to meditate a poem on the *Laſt*
ſubject on which no mind can hope to equal
ation.

s work he did not live to finiſh; his diſeaſes, a
conſumption and an aſthma, put a ſtop to his
; and on Feb. 15, 1708, at the beginning of
irty-third year, put an end to his life. He was
in the cathedral of Hereford; and Sir *Simon*
rt, afterwards Lord Chancellor, gave him a mo-
t in Weſtminſter Abbey. The inſcription at
inſter was written, as I have heard, by Dr. *At-*
, though commonly given to Dr. *Freind*.

His Epitaph at Hereford:

JOHANNES PHILIPS

Obiit 15 die Feb. Anno { Dom. 1708. / Ætat. ſuæ 32.

Cujus

Oſſa ſi requiras, hanc Urnam inſpice;
Si Ingenium neſcias, ipſius Opera conſule;
Si Tumulum deſideras,
Templum adi *Weſtmonaſterienſe*:
Qualis quantuſque Vir fuerit,
Dicat elegans illa & preclara,
Quæ cenotaphium ibi decorat
Inſcriptio.

Quàm interim erga Cognatos pius & officiosus,
Teſtetur hoc ſaxum
A MARIA PHILIPS Matre ipſius pientiſſimâ,
Dilecti Filii Memoriæ non ſine Lacrymis dicatum.

His Epitaph at Weſtminſter:

Herefordiæ condantur Oſſa,
Hoc in Delubro ſtatuitur Imago,
Britanniam omnem pervagatur Fama
JOHANNIS PHILIPS:
Qui Viris bonis doctiſque juxta charus,
Immortale ſuum Ingenium,
Eruditione multiplici excultum,
Miro animi candore,
Eximiâ morum ſimplicitate,
Honeſtavit.
Litterarum Amœniorum ſitim,
Quam Wintoniæ Puer ſentire cœperat,
Inter Ædis Chriſti Alumnos jugiter explevit,
In illo Muſarum Domicilio
Præclaris Æmulorum ſtudiis excitatus,
Optimis ſcribendi Magiſtris ſemper intentus,
Carmina ſermone Patrio compoſuit
A Græcis Latiniſque fontibus feliciter deducta,
Atticis Romaniſque auribus omnino digna,
Verſuum quippe Harmoniam
Rythmo didicerat.
Antiquo illo, libero multiformi
Ad res ipſas apto prorſus, & attemperato,
Non numeris in eundem ferè orbem redeuntibus,
Non Clauſularum ſimiliter cadentium ſono
Metiri:
Uni in hoc laudis genere Miltono ſecundus,
Primoque pœne Par.
Res ſeu Tenues, ſeu Grandes, ſeu Mediocres
Ornandas ſumſerat,
Nuſquam non quod decuit,

Et videt, & assecutus est,
Egregius, quocunque Stylum verteret,
Fandi author, & Modorum artifex.
Fas sit Huic,
Auso licèt à tuâ Metrorum Lege discedere
O Poesis Anglicanæ Pater, atque Conditor, Chaucere,
Alterum tibi latus claudere,
Vatum certe Cineres, tuos undique stipantium
Non dedecebit Chorum.
SIMON HARCOURT Miles,
Viri benè de se, de Litteris meriti
Quoad viveret Fautor,
Post Obitum piè memor,
Hoc illi Saxum poni voluit.
J. PHILIPS, STEPHANI, S. T. P. Archadiaconi
Salop, Filius, natus est Bamptoniæ
in agro Oxon. Dec. 30, 1676.
Obiit Herefordiæ, Feb. 15, 1708.

Philips has been always praised, without contradiction, as a man modest, blameless, and pious; v bore narrowness of fortune without discontent, and dious and painful maladies without impatience; loved by those that knew him, but not ambitious t known. He was probably not formed for a wide c His conversation is commended for its innocent g which seems to have flowed only among his mates, for I have been told, that he was in pany silent and barren, and employed only up pleasures of his pipe. His addiction to tob mentioned by one of his biographers, who r that in all his writings, except *Blenheim*, he ha an opportunity of celebrating the fragrant fu common life he was probably one of those wh by not offending, and whose person was l cause his writings were admired. He died

and lamented, before any part of his reputation had withered, and before his patron St. John had diſgraced him.

His works are few. The *Splendid Shilling* has the uncommon merit of an original deſign, unleſs it may be thought precluded by the ancient *Centos*. To degrade the ſounding words and ſtately conſtruction of Milton, by an application to the loweſt and moſt trivial things, gratifies the mind with a momentary triumph over that grandeur which hitherto held its captives in admiration; the words and things are preſented with a new appearance, and novelty is always grateful where it gives no pain.

But the merit of ſuch performances begins and ends with the firſt author. He that ſhould again adapt Milton's phraſe to the groſs incidents of common life, and even adapt it with more art, which would not be difficult, muſt yet expect but a ſmall part of the praiſe which Philips has obtained; he can only hope to be conſidered as the repeater of a jeſt.

"The parody on Milton," ſays Gildon, "is the "only tolerable production of its author." This is a cenſure too dogmatical and violent. The poem of *Blenheim* was never denied to be tolerable, even by thoſe who do not allow its ſupreme excellence. It is indeed the poem of a ſcholar, *all inexpert of war*; of a man who writes books from books, and ſtudies the world in a college. He ſeems to have formed his ideas of the field of *Blenheim* from the battles of the heroic ages, or the tales of chivalry, with very little comprehenſion of the qualities neceſſary to the compoſition of a modern hero, which Addiſon has diſplayed with ſo much propriety. He makes *Marlborough* behold at diſtance the

the ſlaughter made by *Tallard*, then haſte to encounter and reſtrain him, and mow his way through ranks made headleſs by his ſword.

He imitates Milton's numbers indeed, but imitates them very injudiciouſly. Deformity is eaſily copied; and whatever there is in Milton which the reader wiſhes away, all that is obſolete, peculiar, or licentious, is accumulated with great care by Philips. Milton's verſe was harmonious, in proportion to the general ſtate of our metre in Milton's age; and, if he had written after the improvements made by Dryden, it is reaſonable to believe that he would have admitted a more pleaſing modulation of numbers into his work; but Philips ſits down with a reſolution to make no more muſick than he found; to want all that his maſter wanted, though he is very far from having what his maſter had. Thoſe aſperities, therefore, that are venerable in the *Paradiſe Loſt*, are contemptible in the *Blenheim*.

There is a Latin ode written to his patron St. John, in return for a preſent of wine and tobacco, which cannot be paſſed without notice. It is gay and elegant, and exhibits ſeveral artful accommodations of claſſick expreſſions to new purpoſes. It ſeems better turned than the odes of *Hannes* *.

* This ode I am willing to mention, becauſe there ſeems to be an error in all the printed copies, which is, I find, retained in the laſt. They all read;

Quam Gratiarum cura decentium
O! O! labellis cui Venus inſidet.

The author probably wrote,

Quam Gratiarum cura decentium
Ornat; labellis cui Venus inſidet. Orig. Edit.

To the poem on *Cider*, written in imitation of the *Georgics*, may be given this peculiar praiſe, that it is grounded in truth; that the precepts which it contains are exact and juſt; and that it is therefore, at once, a book of entertainment and of ſcience. This I was told by Miller, the great gardener and botaniſt, whoſe expreſſion was, that *there were many books written on the ſame ſubject in proſe, which do not contain ſo much truth as that poem.*

In the diſpoſition of his matter, ſo as to interſperſe precepts relating to the culture of trees, with ſentiments more generally alluring, and in eaſy and graceful tranſitions from one ſubject to another, he has very diligently imitated his maſter; but he unhappily pleaſed himſelf with blank verſe, and ſuppoſed that the numbers of Milton, which impreſs the mind with veneration, combined as they are with ſubjects of inconceivable grandeur, could be ſuſtained by images which at moſt can riſe only to elegance. Contending angels may ſhake the regions of heaven in blank verſe; but the flow of equal meaſures, and the embelliſhment of rhyme, muſt recommend to our attention the art of engrafting, and decide the merit of the *redſtreak* and *pearmain*.

What ſtudy could confer, Philips had obtained; but natural deficience cannot be ſupplied. He ſeems not born to greatneſs and elevation. He is never lofty, nor does he often ſurpriſe with unexpected excellence; but perhaps of his laſt poem may be applied what Tully ſaid of the poem of Lucretius, that *it is written with much art, though with few blazes of genius.*

The

The following fragment, written by Edmund Smith, upon the works of Philips, has been tranſcribed from the Bodleian manuſcripts.

" A prefatory Diſcourſe to the Poem on Mr. Philips, with a character of his writings.

" It is altogether as equitable ſome account ſhould be given of thoſe who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves by their writings, as of thoſe who are renowned for great actions. It is but reaſonable they, who contribute ſo much to the immortality of others, ſhould have ſome ſhare in it themſelves; and ſince their genius only is diſcovered by their works, it is juſt that their virtues ſhould be recorded by their friends. For no modeſt men (as the perſon I write of was in perfection) will write their own panegyricks; and it is very hard that they ſhould go without reputation, only becauſe they the more deſerve it. The end of writing Lives is for the imitation of the readers. It will be in the power of very few to imitate the duke of Marlborough; we muſt be content with admiring his great qualities and actions, without hopes of following them. The private and ſocial virtues are more eaſily tranſcribed. The Life of Cowley is more inſtructive, as well as more fine, than any we have in our language. And it is to be wiſhed, ſince Mr. Philips had ſo many of the good qualities of that poet, that I had ſome of the abilities of his hiſtorian.

The Grecian philoſophers have had their Lives written, their morals commended, and their ſayings recorded. Mr. Philips had all the virtues to which moſt of them only pretended, and all their integrity without any of their affectation.

The French are very juſt to eminent men in this point; not a learned man nor a poet can die, but all Europe muſt be acquainted with his accompliſhments. They give praiſe and expect it in their turns: they commend their Patru's and Moliere's as well as their Conde's and Turenne's; their Pelliſons and Racines have their elogies, as well as the prince whom they celebrate; and their poems, their mercuries, and orations, nay their very gazettes, are filled with the praiſes of the learned.

I am ſatisfied, had they a Philips among them, and known how to value him; had they one of his learning, his temper, but above all of that particular turn of humour, that altogether new genius, he had been an example to their poets, and a ſubject of their panegyricks, and perhaps ſet in competition with the ancients, to whom only he ought to ſubmit.

I ſhall therefore endeavour to do juſtice to his memory, ſince nobody elſe undertakes it. And indeed I can aſſign no cauſe why ſo many of his acquaintance (that are as willing and more able than myſelf to give an account of him) ſhould forbear to celebrate the memory of one ſo dear to them, but only that they look upon it as a work intirely belonging to me.

I ſhall content myſelf with giving only a character of the perſon and his writings, without meddling with the tranſactions of his life, which was altogether private: I ſhall only make this known obſervation of his family, that there was ſcarce ſo many extraordinary men in any one. I have been acquainted with five of his brothers (of which three are ſtill living), all men of fine parts, yet all of a very unlike temper and genius. So that their fruitful mother, like the mother of

of the gods, ſeems to have produced a numerous offſpring, all of different though uncommon faculties. Of the living, neither their modeſty nor the humour of the preſent age permits me to ſpeak: of the dead, I may ſay ſomething.

One of them had made the greateſt progreſs in the ſtudy of the law of nature and nations of any one I know. He had perfectly maſtered, and even improved, the notions of Grotius, and the more refined ones of Puffendorf. He could refute Hobbes with as much ſolidity as ſome of greater name, and expoſe him with as much wit as Echard. That noble ſtudy, which requires the greateſt reach of reaſon and nicety of diſtinction, was not at all difficult to him. 'Twas a national loſs to be deprived of one who underſtood a ſcience ſo neceſſary, and yet ſo unknown in England. I ſhall add only, he had the ſame honeſty and ſincerity as the perſon I write of, but more heat: the former was more inclined to argue, the latter to divert: one employed his reaſon more; the other his imagination: the former had been well qualified for thoſe poſts, which the modeſty of the latter made him refuſe. His other dead brother would have been an ornament to the college of which he was a member. He had a genius either for poetry or oratory; and, though very young, compoſed ſeveral very agreeable pieces. In all probability he would have wrote as finely, as his brother did nobly. He might have been the Waller, as the other was the Milton of his time. The one might celebrate Marlborough, the other his beautiful offſpring. This had not been ſo fit to deſcribe the actions of heroes as the virtues of private men. In a word, he had been fitter for my place; and while his brother was writing

writing upon the greateſt men that any age ever produced, in a ſtyle equal to them, he might have ſerved as a panegyriſt on him.

This is all I think neceſſary to ſay of his family. I ſhall proceed to himſelf and his writings; which I ſhall firſt treat of, becauſe I know they are cenſured by ſome out of envy, and more out of ignorance.

The *Splendid Shilling*, which is far the leaſt conſiderable, has the more general reputation, and perhaps hinders the character of the reſt. The ſtyle agreed ſo well with the burleſque, that the ignorant thought it could become nothing elſe. Every body is pleaſed with that work. But to judge rightly of the other, requires a perfect maſtery of poetry and criticiſm, a juſt contempt of the little turns and witticiſms now in vogue, and, above all, a perfect underſtanding of poetical diction and deſcription.

All that have any taſte of poetry will agree, that the great burleſque is much to be preferred to the low. It is much eaſier to make a great thing appear little, than a little one great: Cotton and others of a very low genius have done the former; but Philips, Garth, and Boileau, only the latter.

A picture in miniature is every painter's talent; but a piece for a cupola, where all the figures are enlarged, yet proportioned to the eye, requires a maſter's hand.

It muſt ſtill be more acceptable than the low burleſque, becauſe the images of the latter are mean and filthy, and the language itſelf entirely unknown to all men of good breeding. The ſtyle of Billingſgate would not make a very agreeable figure at St. James's. A gentleman would take but little pleaſure in language, which he would think it hard to be accoſted in,

or

or in reading words which he could not pronounce without bluſhing. The lofty burleſque is the more to be admired, becauſe, to write it, the author muſt be maſter of two of the moſt different talents in nature. A talent to find out and expoſe what is ridiculous, is very different from that which is to raiſe and elevate. We muſt read Virgil and Milton for the one, and Horace and Hudibras for the other. We know that the authors of excellent comedies have often failed in the grave ſtyle, and the tragedian as often in comedy. Admiration and Laughter are of ſuch oppoſite natures, that they are ſeldom created by the ſame perſon. The man of mirth is always obſerving the follies and weakneſſes, the ſerious writer the virtues or crimes of mankind; one is pleaſed with contemplating a beau, the other a hero: Even from the ſame object they would draw different ideas: Achilles would appear in very different lights to Therſites and Alexander. The one would admire the courage and greatneſs of his ſoul; the other would ridicule the vanity and raſhneſs of his temper. As the ſatyriſt ſays to Hanibal:

—— I curre per Alpes,
Ut pueris placeas, & declamatio fias.

The contrariety of ſtyle to the ſubject pleaſes the more ſtrongly, becauſe it is more ſurpriſing; the expectation of the reader is pleaſantly deceived, who expects an humble ſtyle from the ſubject, or a great ſubject from the ſtyle. It pleaſes the more univerſally, becauſe it is agreeable to the taſte both of the grave and the merry; but more particularly ſo to thoſe who have a reliſh of the beſt writers, and the nobleſt ſort of poetry. I ſhall produce only one paſſage out of this poet, which is the misfortune of his Galligaſkins:

My Galligaſkins, which have long withſtood
The winter's fury and encroaching froſts,
By time ſubdued (what will not time ſubdue!)

This is admirably pathetical, and ſhews very well the viciſſitudes of ſublunary things. The reſt goes on to a prodigious height; and a man in Greenland could hardly have made a more pathetick and terrible complaint. Is it not ſurpriſing that the ſubject ſhould be ſo mean, and the verſe ſo pompous; that the leaſt things in his poetry, as in a microſcope, ſhould grow great and formidable to the eye? eſpecially conſidering that, not underſtanding French, he had no model for his ſtyle? that he ſhould have no writer to imitate, and himſelf be inimitable? that he ſhould do all this before he was twenty? at an age, which is uſually pleaſed with a glare of falſe thoughts, little turns, and unnatural fuſtian? at an age, at which Cowley, Dryden, and I had almoſt ſaid Virgil, were inconſiderable? So ſoon was his imagination at its full ſtrength, his judgement ripe, and his humour complete.

This poem was written for his own diverſion without any deſign of publication. It was communicated but to *me*; but ſoon ſpread, and fell into the hands of pirates. It was put out, vilely mangled, by Ben Bragge; *and impudently ſaid to be corrected by the author.* This grievance is now grown more epidemical; and no man now has a right to his own thoughts; or a title to his own writings. Xenophon anſwered the Perſian, who demanded his arms, "We have nothing now left but "our arms and our valour; if we ſurrender the one, "how ſhall we make uſe of the other?" Poets have nothing but their wits and their writings; and if they are plundered of the latter, I don't ſee what good the former

r can do them. To pirate, and publickly own it, efix their names to the works they ſteal, to own vow the theft, I believe, was never yet heard of n England. It will ſound oddly to poſterity, in a polite nation, in an enlightened age, under irection of the moſt wiſe, moſt learned, and moſt ous encouragers of knowledge in the world, the rty of a mechanick ſhould be better ſecured than of a ſcholar; that the pooreſt manual operations d be more valued than the nobleſt products of the ; that it ſhould be felony to rob a cobler of a of ſhoes, and no crime to deprive the beſt author s whole ſubſiſtence; that nothing ſhould make a a ſure title to his own writings but the ſtupidity em; that the works of Dryden ſhould meet with ncouragement than thoſe of his own Flecknoe, lackmore; that Tillotſon and St. George, Tom nb and Temple, ſhould be ſet on an equal foot. is the reaſon why this very paper has been ſo long ed; and while the moſt impudent and ſcandalous are publickly vended by the pirates, this innowork is forced to ſteal abroad as if it were a libel. ur preſent writers are by theſe wretches reduced to ſame condition Virgil was, when the centurion d on his eſtate. But I don't doubt but I can fix the Mæcenas of the preſent age, that will re- e them from it. But, whatever effect this piracy have upon us, it contributed very much to the ntage of Mr. Philips; it helped him to a reputa- which he neither deſired nor expected, and to nonour of being put upon a work of which he did hink himſelf capable; but the event ſhewed his eſty. And it was reaſonable to hope, that he, who

who could raise mean subjects so high, should still be more elevated on greater themes; that he, that could draw such noble ideas from a shilling, could not fail upon such a subject as the duke of Marlborough, *which is capable of heightening even the most low and trifling genius.* And, indeed, most of the great works which have been produced in the world have been owing less to the poet than the patron. Men of the greatest genius are sometimes lazy, and want a spur; often modest, and dare not venture in publick; they certainly know their faults in the worst things; and even their best things they are not fond of, because the idea of what they ought to be is far above what they are. This induced me to believe that Virgil desired his work might be burnt, had not the same Augustus that desired him to write them preserved them from destruction. A scribling beau may imagine a Poet *may* be induced to write, by the very pleasure he finds in writing; but that is seldom, when people are necessitated to it. I have known men row, and use very hard labour, for diversion, which, if they had been tied to, they would have thought themselves very unhappy.

But to return to *Blenheim*, that work so much admired by some, and censured by others. I have often wished he had wrote it in Latin, that he might be out of the reach of the empty criticks, who could have as little understood his meaning in that language as they do his beauties in his own.

False criticks have been the plague of all ages; Milton himself, in a very polite court, has been compared to the rumbling of a wheel-barrow: he had been on the wrong side, and therefore could not be a good poet. *And this, perhaps, may be Mr. Philips's case.*

But

But I take generally the ignorance of his readers to be the occaſion of their diſlike. People that have formed their taſte upon the French writers can have no reliſh for Philips: they admire points and turns, and conſequently have no judgement of what is great and majeſtick; he muſt look little in their eyes, when he ſoars ſo high as to be almoſt out of their view. I cannot therefore allow any admirer of the French to be a judge of Blenheim, nor any who takes Bouhours for a compleat critick. He generally judges of the ancients by the moderns, and not the moderns by the ancients; he takes thoſe paſſages of their own authors to be really ſublime which come the neareſt to it; he often calls that a noble and a great thought which is only a pretty and fine one, and has more inſtances of the ſublime out of Ovid de Triſtibus, than he has out of all Virgil.

I ſhall allow, therefore, only thoſe to be judges of Philips, who make the ancients, and particularly Virgil, their ſtandard.

But, before I enter on this ſubject, I ſhall conſider what is particular in the ſtyle of Philips, and examine what ought to be the ſtyle of heroick poetry, and next inquire how far he is come up to that ſtyle.

His ſtyle is particular, becauſe he lays aſide rhyme, and writes in blank verſe, and uſes old words, and frequently poſtpones the adjective to the ſubſtantive, and the ſubſtantive to the verb; and leaves out little particles, *a*, and *the*; *her*, and *his*; and uſes frequent appoſitions. Now let us examine, whether theſe alterations of ſtyle be conformable to the true ſublime.

* * * * * *

* Nothing but the reputation of the author, and his relation to the Univerſity of Oxford, can be aſſigned as a reaſon for making the

the Bodleian library the repoſitory of [illegible]urſe, which, as well for the ſentiments, as the ſtyle, is to the loweſt degree contemptible. The poſition [illegible]ing miniature painting is falſe, and its compariſon with cup[illegible] judicious. The expreſſions, *elevated themes, unnatural f[illegible]* e citation from Xenophon, are puerile and pedantic, the com[illegible]ints of envy and falſe critics common cant. There nothing [illegible]etic in the quotation from 'The Splendid Shilling;' nor does it give occaſion for the ſolemn remark which the writer has made on it. It is not clear to every one that the life of Cowley is more inſtructive, as well as *more fun*, than any *we have* in our language; nor do we know that Tom Thumb and Temple were ever *ſet on an equal* foot. It was in ridicule of ſuch writers as this, that Swift wrote his 'Tritical eſſay on the faculties of the mind.'

WALSH.

WALSH.

WILLIAM WALSH, the ſon of Joſeph Walſh, Eſq; of Abberley in Worceſterſhire, was born in 1663, as appears from the account of Wood; who relates, that at the age of fifteen he became, in 1678, a gentleman commoner of Wadham College.

He left the univerſity without a degree, and purſued his ſtudies in London and at home; that he ſtudied, in whatever place, is apparent from the effect; for he became, in Mr. Dryden's opinion, *the beſt critick in the nation.*

He was not, however, merely a critick or a ſcholar, but a man of faſhion, and, as Dennis remarks, oſtentatiouſly ſplendid in his dreſs. He was likewiſe a member of parliament and a courtier, knight of the ſhire for his native county in ſeveral parliaments; in another the repreſentative of Richmond in Yorkſhire; and gentleman of the horſe to Queen Anne under the duke of Somerſet.

Some of his verſes ſhew him to have been a zealous friend to the Revolution; but his political ardour did not abate his reverence or kindneſs for Dryden, to whom he gave a Diſſertation on Virgil's Paſtorals, in which, however ſtudied, he diſcovers ſome ignorance of the laws of French verſification.

In 1705, he began to correſpond with Mr. Pope, in whom he diſcovered very early the power of poetry. Their letters are written upon the paſtoral comedy of the Italians, and thoſe paſtorals which Pope was then preparing to publiſh.

The kindneſſes which are firſt experienced are ſeldom forgotten. Pope always retained a grateful memory of Walſh's notice, and mentioned him in one of his latter pieces among thoſe that had encouraged his juvenile ſtudies:

——Granville the polite,
And knowing Walſh, would tell me I could write.

In his Eſſay on Criticiſm he had given him more ſplendid praiſe; and, in the opinion of his learned commentator, ſacrificed a little of his judgement to his gratitude.

The time of his death I have not learned. It muſt have happened between 1707, when he wrote to Pope; and 1721, when Pope praiſed him in his Eſſay. The epitaph makes him forty-ſix years old: if Wood's account be right, he died in 1709.

He is known more by his familiarity with greater men, than by any thing done or written by himſelf.

His works are not numerous. In proſe he wrote *Eugenia, a defence of women*; which Dryden honoured with a Preface.

Eſculapius,

Eſculapius, or the Hoſpital of Fools, publiſhed after his death.

A collection of Letters and Poems, amorous and gallant, was publiſhed in the volumes called Dryden's Miſcellany, and ſome other occaſional pieces.

To his Poems and Letters is prefixed a very judicious preface upon Epiſtolary Compoſition and Amorous Poetry.

In his *Golden Age reſtored*, there was ſomething of humour, while the facts were recent; but it now ſtrikes no longer. In his imitation of Horace, the firſt ſtanzas are happily turned; and in all his writings there are pleaſing paſſages. He has however more elegance than vigour, and ſeldom riſes higher than to be pretty.

DRYDEN.

OF the great poet whoſe life I am about to deſcribe, the curioſity which his reputation muſt excite, will require a diſplay more ample than can now be given. His contemporaries, however they reverenced his genius, left his life unwritten; and nothing therefore can be known beyond what caſual mention and uncertain tradition have ſupplied.

JOHN DRYDEN was born Auguſt 9, 1631, at Aldwincle near Oundle, the ſon of Eraſmus Dryden of Tichmerſh; who was the third ſon of Sir Eraſmus Dryden, Baronet, of Canons Aſhby. All theſe places are in Northamptonſhire; but the original ſtock of the family was in the county of Huntingdon.

He is reported by his laſt biographer, Derrick, to have inherited from his father an eſtate of two hundred a year, and to have been bred, as was ſaid, an Anabaptiſt. For either of theſe particulars no authority is given. Such a fortune ought to have ſecured

him

him from that poverty which ſeems always to have oppreſſed him; or if he had waſted it, to have made him aſhamed of publiſhing his neceſſities. But though he had many enemies, who undoubtedly examined his life with a ſcrutiny ſufficiently malicious, I do not remember that he is ever charged with waſte of his patrimony. He was indeed ſometimes reproached for his firſt religion. I am therefore inclined to believe that Derrick's intelligence was partly true, and partly erroneous.

From Weſtminſter School, where he was inſtructed as one of the king's ſcholars by Dr. Buſby, whom he long after continued to reverence, he was in 1650 elected to one of the Weſtminſter ſcholarſhips at Cambridge *.

Of his ſchool performances has appeared only a poem on the death of Lord Haſtings, compoſed with great ambition of ſuch conceits as, notwithſtanding the reformation begun by Waller and Denham, the example of Cowley ſtill kept in reputation. Lord Haſtings died of the ſmall-pox; and his poet has made of the puſtules firſt roſebuds, and then gems; at laſt exalts them into ſtars; and ſays,

> No comet need foretell his change drew on,
> Whoſe corps might ſeem a coſtellation.

At the univerſity he does not appear to have been eager of poetical diſtinction, or to have laviſhed his early wit either on fictitious ſubjects or public occaſions. He probably conſidered that he who purpoſed to be an author, ought firſt to be a ſtudent. He obtained, whatever was the reaſon, no fellowſhip in the

* He went off to Trinity College, and was admitted to a Bachelor's Degree in 1653.

College.

College. Why he was excluded cannot now be known, and it is vain to gueſs; had he thought himſelf injured, he knew how to complain. In the life of Plutarch he mentions his education in the College with gratitude; but in a prologue at Oxford, he has theſe lines:

> Oxford to him a dearer name ſhall be
> Than his own mother-univerſity;
> Thebes did his rude unknowing youth engage;
> He chooſes Athens in his riper age.

It was not till the death of Cromwell, in 1658, that he became a public candidate for fame, by publiſhing *Heroic Stanzas on the late Lord Protector*; which, compared with the verſes of Sprat and Waller on the ſame occaſion, were ſufficient to raiſe great expectations of the riſing poet.

When the king was reſtored, Dryden, like the other panegyriſts of uſurpation, changed his opinion, or his profeſſion, and publiſhed ASTREA REDUX, *a poem on the happy reſtoration and return of his moſt ſacred Majeſty King Charles the Second.*

The reproach of inconſtancy was, on this occaſion, ſhared with ſuch numbers, that it produced neither hatred nor diſgrace! if he changed, he changed with the nation. It was, however, not totally forgotten when his reputation raiſed him enemies.

The ſame year he praiſed the new king in a ſecond poem on his reſtoration. In the ASTREA was the line,

> An horrid *ſtillneſs* firſt *invades* the *ear*,
> And in that ſilence we a tempeſt fear.

for

for which he was perſecuted with perpetual ridicule, perhaps with more than was deſerved. *Silence* is indeed mere privation; and, ſo conſidered, cannot *invade*; but privation likewiſe certainly is *darkneſs*, and probably *cold*; yet poetry has never been refuſed the right of aſcribing effects or agency to them as to poſitive powers. No man ſcruples to ſay that *darkneſs* hinders him from his work; or that *cold* has killed the plants. Death is alſo privation; yet who has made any difficulty of aſſigning to Death a dart and the power of ſtriking?

In ſettling the order of his works there is ſome difficulty; for, even when they are important enough to be formally offered to a patron, he does not commonly date his dedication; the time of writing and publiſhing is not always the ſame; nor can the firſt editions be eaſily found, if even from them could be obtained the neceſſary information.

The time at which his firſt play was exhibited is not certainly known, becauſe it was not printed till it was ſome years afterwards altered and revived; but ſince the plays are ſaid to be printed in the order in which they were written, from the dates of ſome, thoſe of others may be inferred; and thus it may be collected that in 1663, in the thirty-ſecond year of his life, he commenced a writer for the ſtage; compelled undoubtedly by neceſſity, for he appears never to have loved that exerciſe of his genius, or to have much pleaſed himſelf with his own dramas.

Of the ſtage, when he had once invaded it, he kept poſſeſſion for many years; not indeed without the competition of rivals who ſometimes prevailed, or the cenſure of criticks, which was often poignant

and often juſt; but with ſuch a degree of reputation as made him at leaſt ſecure of being heard, whatever might be the final determination of the public.

His firſt piece was a comedy called the *Wild Gallant*. He began with no happy auguries; for his performance was ſo much diſapproved, that he was compelled to recall it, and change it from its imperfect ſtate to the form in which it now appears, and which is yet ſufficiently defective to vindicate the criticks.

I wiſh that there were no neceſſity of following the progreſs of his theatrical fame, or tracing the meanders of his mind through the whole ſeries of his dramatick performances; it will be fit however to enumerate them, and to take eſpecial notice of thoſe that are diſtinguiſhed by any peculiarity intrinſick or concomitant; for the compoſition and fate of eight and twenty dramas include too much of a poetical life to be omitted.

In 1664 he publiſhed the *Rival Ladies*, which he dedicated to the Earl of Orrery, a man of high reputation both as a writer and a ſtateſman. In this play he made his eſſay of dramatick rhyme, which he defends in his dedication, with ſufficient certainty of a favourable hearing; for Orrery was himſelf a writer of rhyming tragedies.

He then joined with Sir Robert Howard in the *Indian Queen*, a tragedy in rhyme. The parts which either of them wrote are not diſtinguiſhed.

The *Indian Emperor* was publiſhed in 1667. It is a tragedy in rhyme, intended for a ſequel to *Howard's Indian Queen*. Of this connection notice was given to the audience by printed bills, diſtributed at the door; ſuppoſed to be ridiculed in the *Rehear-*

ſal,

ſal, when Bayes tells how many reams he has printed, to inſtill into the audience ſome conception of his plot.

In this play is the deſcription of Night, which *Rymer* has made famous by preferring it to thoſe of all other poets.

The practice of making tragedies in rhyme was introduced ſoon after the Reſtoration, as it ſeems, by the earl of Orrery, in compliance with the opinion of Charles the Second, who had formed his taſte by the French theatre; and Dryden, who wrote, and made no difficulty of declaring that he wrote only to pleaſe, and who perhaps knew that by his dexterity of verſification he was more likely to excel others in rhyme than without it, very readily adopted his maſter's preference. He therefore made rhyming tragedies, till, by the prevalence of manifeſt propriety, he ſeems to have grown aſhamed of making them any longer.

To this play is prefixed a very vehement defence of dramatick rhyme, in confutation of the preface to the *Duke of Lerma*, in which Sir Robert Howard had cenſured it.

In 1667, he publiſhed *Annus Mirabilis*, the *Year of Wonders*, which may be eſteemed one of his moſt elaborate works.

It is addreſſed to Sir Robert Howard by a letter, which is not properly a dedication; and, writing to a poet, he has interſperſed many critical obſervations, of which ſome are common, and ſome perhaps ventured without much conſideration. He began, even now, to exerciſe the domination of conſcious genius, by recommending his own performance: "I am ſa-

"tisfied

" tisfied that as the Prince and General [Rupert " and Monk] are incomparably the beſt ſubjects I " ever had, ſo what I have written on them is much " better than what I have performed on any other. " As I have endeavoured to adorn my poem with no- " ble thoughts, ſo much more to expreſs thoſe thoughts " with elocution.

It is written in quatrains, or heroick ſtanzas of four lines; a meaſure which he had learned from the *Gondibert* of Davenant, and which he then thought the moſt majeſtick that the Engliſh language affords. Of this ſtanza he mentions the encumbrances, encreaſed as they were by the exactneſs which the age required. It was, throughout his life, very much his cuſtom to recommend his works, by repreſentation of the difficulties that he had encountered, without appearing to have ſufficiently conſidered, that where there is no difficulty there is no praiſe.

There ſeems to be in the conduct of Sir Robert Howard and Dryden towards each other, ſomething that is not now eaſily to be explained. Dryden, in his dedication to the earl of Orrery, had defended dramatick rhyme; and Howard, in the preface to a collection of plays, had cenſured his opinion. Dryden vindicated himſelf in his *Dialogue on Dramatick Poetry*; Howard, in his Preface to the *Duke of Lerma*, animadverted on the Vindication; and Dryden, in a Preface to the *Indian Emperor*, replied to the Animadverſions with great aſperity, and almoſt with contumely. The dedication to this play is dated the year in which the *Ani Mirabilis* was publiſhed. Here appears a ſtrange inſiſtency; but Langbaine affords ſome help, by that the anſwer to Howard was not publiſhed in

in the firſt edition of the play, but was added when it was afterwards reprinted; and as the *Duke of Lerma* did not appear till 1668, the ſame year in which the Dialogue was publiſhed, there was time enough for enmity to grow up between authors, who, writing both for the theatre, were naturally rivals.

He was now ſo much diſtinguiſhed, that in 1668 he ſucceeded Sir William Davenant as poet-laureat. The ſalary of the laureat had been raiſed in favour of Jonſon, by Charles the Firſt, from an hundred marks to one hundred pounds a year, and a tierce of wine; a revenue in thoſe days not inadequate to the conveniences of life.

The ſame year he publiſhed his eſſay on Dramatick Poetry, an elegant and inſtructive dialogue; in which we are told by Prior, that the principal character is meant to repreſent the duke of Dorſet. This work ſeems to have given Addiſon a model for his Dialogues upon Medals.

Secret Love, or the Maiden Queen, is a tragi-comedy. In the preface he diſcuſſes a curious queſtion, whether a poet can judge well of his own productions: and determines very juſtly, that, of the plan and diſpoſition, and all that can be reduced to principles of ſcience, the author may depend upon his own opinion; but that, in thoſe parts where fancy predominates, ſelf-love may eaſily deceive. He might have obſerved, that what is good only becauſe it pleaſes, cannot be pronounced good till it has been found to pleaſe.

Sir Martin Marr-all is a comedy, publiſhed without preface or dedication, and at firſt without the name of the author. Langbaine charges it, like moſt of

the

the reſt, with plagiariſm; and obſerves that the ſong is tranſlated from Voiture, allowing however that both the ſenſe and meaſure are exactly obſerved.

The Tempeſt is an alteration of Shakſpeare's play, made by Dryden in conjunction with Davenant, "whom," ſays he, "I found of ſo quick a fancy, "that nothing was propoſed to him in which he "could not ſuddenly produce a thought extremely "pleaſant and ſurpriſing; and thoſe firſt thoughts of "his, contrary to the Latin proverb, were not always "the leaſt happy, and as his fancy was quick, ſo "likewiſe were the products of it remote and new. "He borrowed not of any other, and his imagina-"tions were ſuch as could not eaſily enter into any "other man."

The effect produced by the conjunction of theſe two powerful minds was, that to Shakſpeare's monſter Caliban is added a ſiſter-monſter Sycorax; and a woman, who, in the original play, had never ſeen a man, is in this brought acquainted with a man that had never ſeen a woman.

About this time, in 1673, Dryden ſeems to have had his quiet much diſturbed by the ſucceſs of the *Empreſs of Morocco*, a tragedy written in rhyme by *Elkanah Settle*; which was ſo much applauded, as to make him think his ſupremacy of reputation in ſome danger. Settle had not only been proſperous on the ſtage, but, in the confidence of ſucceſs, had publiſhed his play, with ſculptures and a preface of defiance. Here was one offence added to another; and, for the laſt blaſt of inflammation, it was acted at Whitehall by the court-ladies.

Dryden

Dryden could not now repreſs theſe emotions, which he called indignation, and others jealouſy; but wrote upon the play and the dedication ſuch criticiſm as malignant impatience could pour out in haſte.

Of Settle he gives this character. "He's an animal of a moſt deplored underſtanding, without converſation. His being is in a twilight of ſenſe, and "ſome glimmering of thought, which he can never "faſhion into wit or Engliſh. His ſtyle is boiſterous "and rough-hewn, his rhyme incorrigibly lewd, and "his numbers perpetually harſh and ill-ſounding. "The little talent which he has, is fancy. He ſometimes labours with a thought; but, with the pudder "he makes to bring it into the world, 'tis commonly "ſtill-born; ſo that for want of learning and elocution, "he will never be able to expreſs any thing either naturally or juſtly!"

This is not very decent; yet this is one of the pages in which criticiſm prevails moſt over brutal fury. He proceeds: "He has a heavy hand at fools, and "a great felicity in writing nonſenſe for them. Fools "they will be in ſpite of him. His King, his two Empreſſes, his villain, and his ſub-villain, nay his hero, "have all a certain natural caſt of the father—their "folly was born and bred in them, and ſomething of "the Elkanah will be viſible."

This is Dryden's general declamation; I will not withhold from the reader a particular remark. Having gone through the firſt act, he ſays, "To conclude this act with the moſt rumbling piece of nonſenſe ſpoken yet,

"To

" If this be not a very liberal meſs, I will refer myſelf " to the ſtomach of any moderate gueſt. And a rare " meſs it is, far excelling any Weſtminſter white- " broth. It is a kind of gibblet porridge, made of " the gibblets of a couple of young geeſe, ſtodged full " of *meteors, orbs, ſpheres, track, hideous draughts, dark* " *characters, white forms,* and *radiant lights,* deſigned " not only to pleaſe appetite, and indulge luxury; " but it is alſo phyſical, being an approved medicine to " purge choler: for it is propounded by Morena, as a " receipt to cure their fathers of their choleric hu- " mours: and were it written in characters as barba- " rous as the words, might very well paſs for a " doctor's bill. To conclude, it is porridge, 'tis a re- " ceipt, 'tis a pig with a pudding in the belly, 'tis I " know not what: for, certainly, never any one that " pretended to write ſenſe, had the impudence before " to put ſuch ſtuff as this into the mouths of thoſe " that were to ſpeak it before an audience, whom " he did not take to be all fools; and after that to " print it too, and expoſe it to the examination of " the world. But let us ſee, what we can make of " this ſtuff:

For when we're dead, and our freed ſouls enlarg'd—

" Here he tells us what it is to be *dead;* it is to have " *our freed ſouls ſet free.* Now if to have a ſoul ſet " free, is to be dead, then to have a *freed ſoul* ſet free, " is to have a dead man die.

Then gentle, as a happy lover's ſigh—

" They two like one *ſigh,* and that one *ſigh* like two " wandering meteors,

—ſhall fly through the air—

" That

"That is, they ſhall mount above like falling "ſtars, or elſe they ſhall ſkip like two Jacks with "lanthorns, or Will with a wiſp, and Madge with a "candle."

And in their airy walk ſteal into their cruel fathers breaſts, like ſubtle gueſts. So "that their *fathers breaſts* "muſt be in an *airy walk*, an airy *walk* of a *flier*. *And* "*there they will read their ſouls, and track the ſpheres* "*of their paſſions.* That is, theſe walking fliers, Jack "with a lanthorn, &c. will put on his ſpectacles, and "fall a *reading ſouls*, and put on his pumps and fall a "*tracking of ſpheres*; ſo that he will read and run, "walk and fly at the ſame time! Oh! Nimble Jack! "*Then he will ſee, how revenge here, how ambition* "*there*—The birds will hop about. *And then view* "*the dark characters of ſieges, ruins, murders, blood, and* "*wars, in their orbs: Track the characters* to their "forms! Oh! rare ſport for Jack. Never was place "ſo full of game as theſe breaſts! You cannot ſtir "but fluſh a ſphere, ſtart a character, or unkennel an "orb!"

Settle's is ſaid to have been the firſt play embelliſhed with ſculptures; thoſe ornaments ſeem to have given poor Dryden great diſturbance. He tries however to eaſe his pain, by venting his malice in a parody.

"The poet has not only been ſo impudent to ex-"poſe all this ſtuff, but ſo arrogant to defend it with "an epiſtle; like a ſaucy booth-keeper, that, when "he had put a cheat upon the people, would wrangle "and fight with any that would not like it, or would "offer to diſcover it; for which arrogance our poet "receives this correction; and to jerk him a little

" the ſharper, I will not tranſ[illegible] his verſe, but by
" the help of his own [illegible]ds tranſnoon-ſenſe ſenſe,
" that, by my ſtuff, people may judge the better what
" his is;

" Great Boy, thy tragedy and ſculptures done
" From preſs, and plates in fleets do homeward
" come:
" And in ridiculous and humble pride,
" Their courſe in ballad-fingers haſkets guide,
" Whoſe greaſy twigs do all new beauties take,
" From the gay ſhews thy dainty ſculptures make.
" Thy lines a meſs of rhyming nonſenſe yield,
" A ſenſeleſs tale, with flattering fuſtian fill'd.
" No grain of ſenſe does in one line appear,
" Thy words big bulks of boiſterous bombaſt bear.
" With noiſe they move, and from players mouths re-
" bound,
" When their tongues dance to thy words empty ſound
" By thee inſpir'd the rumbling verſes roll,
" As if that rhyme and bombaſt lent a ſoul:
" And with that ſoul they ſeem taught duty too,
" To huffing words does humble nonſenſe bow,
" As if it would thy worthleſs worth enhance,
" To th' loweſt rank of fops thy praiſe advance;
" To whom, by inſtinct, all thy ſtuff is dear;
" Their loud claps echo to the theatre.
" From breaths of fools thy commendation ſpreads,
" Fame ſings thy praiſe with mouths of loggerheads.
" With noiſe and laughing each thy fuſtian greets,
" 'Tis clapt by quires of empty-headed cits,
" Who have their tribute ſent, and homage given,
" As men in whiſpers ſend loud noiſe to heaven.

" Thus I have daubed him with his own puddle:
" and now we are come from aboard his dancing,
" maſking, rebounding, breathing fleet; and as it [illegible]

ad landed at Gotham, we meet nothing but fools nd nonſenſe."

Such was the criticiſm to which the genius of Dryn could be reduced, between rage and terrour; rage ith little provocation, and terrour with little danger.

To ſee the higheſt minds thus levelled with the neaneſt, may produce ſome ſolace to the conſciouſneſs of weakneſs, and ſome mortification to the pride of wiſdom. But let it be remembered, that minds are not levelled in their powers but when they are firſt levelled in their deſires. Dryden and Settle had both placed their happineſs in the claps of multitudes.

The *Mock Aſtrologer*, a comedy, is dedicated to the illuſtrious duke of Newcaſtle, whom he courts by adding to his praiſes thoſe of his lady, not only as a lover but a partner of his ſtudies. It is unpleaſing to think how many names, once celebrated, are ſince forgotten. Of Newcaſtle's works nothing is not known but his treatiſe on horſemanſhip.

The Preface ſeems very elaborately written, an contains many juſt remarks on the Fathers of the Eng liſh drama. Shakeſpeare's plots, he ſays, are in th hundred novels of *Cinthio*; thoſe of Beaumont a Fletcher in Spaniſh Stories; Jonſon only made the for himſelf. His criticiſms upon tragedy, come and farce, are judicious and profound. He end vours to defend the immorality of ſome of his co dies by the example of former writers; which is to ſay, that he was not the firſt nor perhaps the gre offender. Againſt thoſe that accuſed him of plagi he alledges a favourable expreſſion of the king: " only deſired that they, who accuſe me of t

"would ſteal him plays like mine;" and then relates how much labour he ſpends in fitting for the Engliſh ſtage what he borrows from others.

Tyrannick Love, or the Virgin Martyr, was another tragedy in rhyme, conſpicuous for many paſſages of ſtrength and elegance, and many of empty noiſe and ridiculous turbulence. The rants of Maximin have been always the ſport of criticiſm; and were at length, if his own confeſſion may be truſted, the ſhame of the writer.

Of this play he takes care to let the reader know, that it was contrived and written in ſeven weeks. Want of time was often his excuſe, or perhaps ſhortneſs of time was his private boaſt in the form of an apology.

It was written before the *Conqueſt of Granada*, but publiſhed after it. The deſign is to recommend piety. "I conſidered that pleaſure was not the only end of "poeſy, and that even the inſtructions of morality "were not ſo wholly the buſineſs of a poet, as that "precepts and examples of piety were to be omitted; "for to leave that employment altogether to the clergy, "were to forget that religion was firſt taught in verſe, "which the lazineſs or dullneſs of ſucceeding prieſt-"hood turned afterwards into proſe." Thus fooliſhly could Dryden write, rather than not ſhew his malice to the parſons.

The two parts of the *Conqueſt of Granada* are written with a ſeeming determination to glut the publick with dramatick wonders; to exhibit in its higheſt elevation a theatrical meteor of incredible love and impoſſible valour, and to leave no room for a wilder flight to the extravagance of poſterity. All the rays of romantick

heat, whether amorous or warlike, glow in Amanzor by a kind of concentration. He is above all laws; he is exempt from all reſtraints; he ranges the world at will, and governs wherever he appears. He fights without enquiring the cauſe, and loves in ſpight of the obligations of juſtice, of rejection by his miſtreſs, and of prohibition from the dead. Yet the ſcenes are, for the moſt part, delightful; they exhibit a kind of illuſtrious depravity, and majeſtic madneſs: ſuch as, if it is ſometimes deſpiſed, is often reverenced, and in which the ridiculous is mingled with the aſtoniſhing.

In the Epilogue to the ſecond part of the *Conqueſt of Granada*, Dryden indulges his favourite pleaſure of diſcrediting his predeceſſors; and this Epilogue he has defended by a long poſtſcript. He had promiſed a ſecond dialogue, in which he ſhould more fully treat of the virtues and faults of the Engliſh poets, who have written in the dramatick, epick, or lyrick way. This promiſe was never formally performed; but, with reſpect to the dramatick writers, he has given us in his prefaces, and in this poſtſcript, ſomething equivalent; but his purpoſe being to exalt himſelf by the compariſon, he ſhews faults diſtinctly, and only praiſes excellence in general terms.

A play thus written, in profeſſed defiance of probability, naturally drew upon itſelf the vultures of the theatre. One of the criticks that attacked it was *Martin Clifford*, to whom *Sprat* addreſſed the Life of Cowley, with ſuch veneration of his critical powers as might naturally excite great expectations of inſtruction from his remarks. But let honeſt credulity beware of receiving characters from contemporary writers. Clifford's remarks, by the favour of Dr. *Percy*,

were at laſt obtained, and that no man may ever want them more, I will extract enough to ſatisfy all reaſonable deſire.

In the firſt Letter his obſervation is only general: "You do live," ſays he, "in as much ignorance and "darkneſs as you did in the womb: your writings are "like a Jack-of-all trades ſhop; they have a variety, "but nothing of value; and if thou art not the dulleſt "plant-animal that ever the earth produced, all that "I have converſed with are ſtrangely miſtaken in "thee."

In the ſecond he tells him that Almanzor is not more copied from Achilles than from Ancient Piſtol. "But I am," ſays he, "ſtrangely miſtaken if I have "not ſeen this very *Almanzor* of yours in ſome diſ-"guiſe about this town, and paſſing under another "name. Pr'ythee tell me true, was not this Huffcap "once the *Indian Emperor*, and at another time did "he not call himſelf *Maximin?* Was not *Lyndaraxa* "once called *Almeira?* I mean under *Montezuma* the "Indian Emperor. I proteſt and vow they are either "the ſame, or ſo alike that I cannot, for my heart, "diſtinguiſh one from the other. You are therefore a "ſtrange unconſcionable thief; thou art not content "to ſteal from others, but doſt rob thy poor wretched "ſelf too."

Now was *Settle's* time to take his revenge. He wrote a vindication of his own lines; and, if he is forced to yield any thing, makes repriſals upon his enemy. To ſay that his anſwer is equal to the cenſure, is no high commendation. To expoſe Dryden's method of analyſing his expreſſions, he tries the ſame experiment upon the ſame deſcription of the ſhips in the

the *Indian Emperor*, of which however he does not deny the excellence; but intends to ſhew, that by ſtudied miſconſtruction every thing may be equally repreſented as ridiculous. After ſo much of Dryden's elegant animadverſions, juſtice requires that ſomething of Settle's ſhould be exhibited. The following obſervations are therefore extracted from a quarto pamphlet of ninety-five pages:

" Fate after him below with pain did move,
" And victory could ſcarce keep pace above.

" Theſe two lines, if he can ſhew me any ſenſe or " thought in, or any thing but bombaſt and noiſe, he " ſhall make me believe every word in his obſerva- " tions on *Morocco* ſenſe.

" In the *Empreſs of Morocco* were theſe lines:

" I'll travel then to ſome remoter ſphere,
" Till I find out new worlds, and crown you there.

" On which Dryden made this remark:

" *I believe our learned author takes a ſphere for a* " *country; the ſphere of Morocco, as if Morocco were the* " *globe of earth and water; but a globe is no ſphere nei-* " *ther, by his leave,*" &c. So *ſphere* muſt not be ſenſe, " unleſs it relate to a circular motion about a globe, " in which ſenſe the aſtronomers uſe it. I would deſire " him to expound thoſe lines in *Granada*:

" I'll to the turrets of the palace go,
" And add new fire to thoſe that fight below.
" Thence, hero-like, with torches by my ſide,
" (Far be the omen tho') my Love I'll guide.
" No, like his better fortune I'll appear,
" With open arms, looſe vail and flowing hair,
" Juſt flying forward from my rowling ſphere,

" I wonder, if he be ſo ſtrict, how he dares make ſo " bold with *ſphere* himſelf, and be ſo critical in other " men's writings. Fortune is fancied ſtanding on a " globe, not on a *ſphere*, as he told us in the firſt Act.

" Becauſe *Elkanah's Similies are the moſt unlike things* " *to what they are compared in the world*, I'll venture to " ſtart a ſimile in his *Annus Mirabilis:* he gives this " poetical deſcription of the ſhip called the *London:*

" The goodly London in her gallant trim,
" The Phenix-daughter of the vanquiſht old,
" Like a rich bride does to the ocean ſwim,
" And on her ſhadow rides in floating gold.
" Her flag aloft ſpread ruffling in the wind,
" And ſanguine ſtreamers ſeem'd the flood to fire:
" The weaver, charm'd with what his loom deſign'd,
" Goes on to ſea, and knows not to retire.
" With roomy decks her guns of mighty ſtrength,
" Whoſe low-laid mouths each mounting billow laves,
" Deep in her draught, and warlike in her length,
" She ſeems a ſea-waſp flying on the waves.

" What a wonderful pother is here, to make all theſe " poetical beautifications of a ſhip! that is, a *phenix* " in the firſt ſtanza, and but a *waſp* in the laſt: nay, " to make his humble compariſon of a *waſp* more ri- " diculous, he does not ſay it flies upon the waves as " nimbly as a waſp, or the like, but it ſeemed a " *waſp*. But our author at the writing of this was " not in his altitudes, to compare ſhips to floating " palaces; a compariſon to the purpoſe, was a per- " fection he did not arrive to, till his *Indian Emperor's* " days. But perhaps his ſimilitude has more in it " than we imagine; this ſhip had a great many guns " in her, and they, put all together, made the ſting " in the waſp's tail: for this is all the reaſon I can

" gueſs,

" gueſs, why it ſeem'd a *waſp*. But, becauſe we will " allow him all we can to help out, let it be a *phenix* " *ſea-waſp*, and the rarity of ſuch an animal, may " do much towards heightening the fancy.

" It had been much more to his purpoſe, if he had " deſigned to render the ſenſeleſs play little, to have " ſearched for ſome ſuch pedantry as this;

" Two ifs ſcarce make one poſſibility.
" If juſtice will take all and nothing give,
" Juſtice, methinks, is not diſtributive.
" To die or kill you is the alternative,
" Rather than take your life, I will not live.

" Obſerve, how prettily our author chops logick " in heroick verſe. Three ſuch fuſtian canting words " as *diſtributive*, *alternative*, and *two ifs*, no man but " himſelf would have come within the noiſe of. But " he's a man of general learning, and all comes into " his play.

" 'Twould have done well too, if he could have " met with a rant or two, worth the obſervation: " ſuch as,

" Move ſwiftly, Sun, and fly a lover's pace,
" Leave months and weeks behind thee in thy race.

" But ſurely the Sun, whether he flies a lover's or " not a lover's pace, leaves weeks and months, nay " years too, behind him in his race.

" Poor Robin, or any other of the Philomathe- " maticks, would have given him ſatisfaction in the " point.

" If I could kill thee now, thy fate's ſo low,
" That I muſt ſtoop, ere I can give the blow.
" But mine is fixt ſo far above thy crown,
" That all thy men,
" Piled on thy back, can never pull it down.

" Now

" Now where that is, Almanzor's fate is fixt, I " cannot gueſs; but wherever it is, I believe Al- " manzor, and think that all Abdalla's ſubjects, piled " upon one another, might not pull down his fate ſo " well as without piling: beſides, I think Abdalla ſo " wiſe a man, that if Almanzor had told him piling " his men upon his back might do the feat, he would " ſcarce bear ſuch a weight, for the pleaſure of the " exploit; but it is a huff, and let Abdalla do it if he " dare.

" The people like a headlong torrent go,
" And every dam they break or overflow.
" But unoppos'd, they either loſe their force,
" Or wind in volumes to their former courſe.

" A very pretty alluſion, contrary to all ſenſe or rea- " ſon. Torrents, I take it, let them wind never ſo " much, can never return to their former courſe, un- " leſs he can ſuppoſe that fountains can go upwards, " which is impoſſible: nay more, in the foregoing " page he tells us ſo too. A trick of a very unfaith- " ful memory,

" But can no more than fountains upward flow.

" Which of a *torrent*, which ſignifies a rapid ſtream, " is much more impoſſible. Beſides, if he goes to " quibble, and ſay that it is poſſible by art water may " be made return, and the ſame water run twice in " one and the ſame channel: then he quite confutes " what he ſays; for, it is by being oppoſed, that it " runs into its former courſe: for all engines that " make water ſo return, do it by compulſion and op- " poſition. Or, if he means a headlong torrent for a " tide, which would be ridiculous, yet they do not " wind in volumes, but come fore-right back (if their

" upright

" upright lies ſtraight to their former courſe), and " that by oppoſition of the ſea-water, that drives them " back again.

" And for fancy, when he lights of any thing like " it, 'tis a wonder if it be not borrowed. As here, " for example of, I find this fanciful thought in his " *Ann. Mirab.*

" Old father Thames raiſed up his reverend head;
" But fear'd the fate of Simoeis would return;
" Deep in his ooze he ſought his ſedgy bed;
" And ſhrunk his waters back into his urn.

" This is ſtolen from Cowley's *Davideis*, p. 9.

" Swift Jordan ſtarted, and ſtrait backward fled,
" Hiding amongſt thick reeds his aged head.
" And when the Spaniards their aſſault begin,
" At once beat thoſe without and thoſe within.

" This Almanzor ſpeaks of himſelf; and ſure for one " man to conquer an army within the city, and ano- " ther without the city, at once, is ſomething diffi- " cult; but this flight is pardonable, to ſome we meet " with in *Granada*. Oſmin, ſpeaking of Almanzor:

" Who, like a tempeſt that outrides the wind,
" Made a juſt battle, ere the bodies join'd.

" Pray what does this honourable perſon mean by a " *tempeſt that outrides the wind!* A tempeſt that out- " rides itſelf. To ſuppoſe a tempeſt without wind, is " as bad as ſuppoſing a man to walk without feet; for " if he ſuppoſes the tempeſt to be ſomething diſtinct " from the wind, yet as being the effect of wind only, " to come before the cauſe is a little prepoſterous: ſo " that, if he takes it one way, or if he takes it the " other, thoſe two *ifs* will ſcarce make one *poſſibility*." Enough of Settle.

Marriage

Marriage Alamode is a comedy dedicated to the Earl of Rocheſter; whom he acknowledges not only as the defender of his poetry, but the promoter of his fortune. Langbaine places this play in 1673. The earl of Rocheſter therefore was the famous Wilmot, whom yet tradition always repreſents as an enemy to Dryden, and who is mentioned by him with ſome diſreſpect in the preface to Juvenal.

The Aſſignation, or Love in a Nunnery, a comedy, was driven off the ſtage, *againſt the opinion*, as the author ſays, *of the beſt judges*. It is dedicated, in a very elegant addreſs, to Sir Charles Sedley; in which he finds an opportunity for his uſual complaint of hard treatment and unreaſonable cenſure.

Amboyna is a tiſſue of mingled dialogue in verſe and proſe, and was perhaps written in leſs time than *The Virgin Martyr*; though the author thought not fit either oſtentatiouſly or mournfully to tell how little labour it coſt him, or at how ſhort a warning he produced it. It was a temporary performance, written in the time of the Dutch war, to inflame the nation againſt their enemies; to whom he hopes, as he declares in his Epilogue, to make his poetry not leſs deſtructive than that by which Tyrtæus of old animated the Spartans. This play was written in the ſecond Dutch war in 1673.

Troilus and Creſſida, is a play altered from Shakſpeare; but ſo altered that even in Langbaine's opinion, *the laſt ſcene in the third act is a maſterpiece*. It is introduced by a diſcourſe on *the grounds of criticiſm in tragedy*; to which I ſuſpect that Rymer's book had given occaſion.

The *Spaniſh Fryar* is tragi-comedy, eminent for the happy coincidence and coalition of the two plots. As it

it was written againſt the Papiſts, it would naturally at that time have friends and enemies; and partly by the popularity which it obtained at firſt, and partly by the real power both of the ſerious and riſible part, it continued long a favourite of the publick.

It was Dryden's opinion, at leaſt for ſome time, and he maintains it in the dedication of this play, that the drama required an alternation of comick and tragick ſcenes, and that it is neceſſary to mitigate by alleviations of merriment the preſſure of ponderous events, and the fatigue of toilſome paſſions. "Whoever," ſays he, "cannot perform both parts, *is but half a* "*writer for the ſtage.*"

The *Duke of Guiſe*, a tragedy written in conjunction with Lee, as *Oedipus* had been before, ſeems to deſerve notice only for the offence which it gave to the remnant of the Covenanters, and in general to the enemies of the court, who attacked him with great violence, and were anſwered by him; though at laſt he ſeems to withdraw from the conflict, by transferring the greater part of the blame or merit to his partner. It happened that a contract had been made between them, by which they were to join in writing a play; and *he happened*, ſays Dryden, *to claim the promiſe juſt upon the finiſhing of a poem, when I would have been glad of a little reſpite.*—Two *thirds of it belonged to him; and to me only the firſt ſcene of the play, the whole fourth act, and the firſt half or ſomewhat more of the fifth.*

This was a play written profeſſedly for the party of the duke of York, whoſe ſucceſſion was then oppoſed. A parallel is intended between the Leaguers of France and the Covenanters of England; and this intention produced the controverſy.

Albion

Albion and *Albanius* is a muſical drama or opera, written, like the *Duke of Guiſe*, againſt the Republicans. With what ſucceſs it was performed, I have not found *.

The

* This drama, as Johnſon ſays, is written againſt the republicans, but it is pointed more immediately againſt the earl of Shafteſbury, who, at the time of writing it, was become odious. To explain the deſign and tell the fate of it, will require a long note.

In one of the ſtage directions is a deſcription of a device of machinery in theſe words: "Fame riſes out of the middle of the ſtage, "ſtanding on a globe, on which is the arms of England: the globe "reſts on a pedeſtal: on the front of the pedeſtal is drawn a man "with a long, lean, pale face, with fiends wings, and ſnakes twiſted "round his body: he is encompaſſed by ſeveral phanatical rebelli-"ous heads, who ſuck poiſon from him, which runs out of a tap "in his ſide."

The wit of this ſatire at this day ſtands in ſome need of an explanation. The earl of Shafteſbury was afflicted with a dropſy, and had frequent recourſe to the expedient of tapping; and ſuch was the malevolence of his enemies, that although they had their choice of numberleſs particulars by which he might have been diſtinguiſhed, that of the tap appeared to them the moſt eligible. Some time before his death, it was a faſhion in taverns to have wine brought to gueſts, and ſet upon table in a wooden or ſilver veſſel ſhaped like a tun, with a cock to it, and this was called a Shafteſbury.

As it was an opera, this drama was ſet to muſic by Grabu, a French muſician, who in the preface is complimented to the prejudice of Purcell. It abounds with ridiculous pageantry, ſuch as Juno drawn by peacocks, and the appearance of a rainbow, or ſome ſuch meteor, which had then lately been ſeen in the heavens; Dances were alſo introduced into it, compoſed by Mr. Lane, ſo that the expence of the repreſentation far exceeded the amount of the money taken for admittance. Downes ſays, it was performed on a very unlucky day, viz. that on which the duke of Monmouth landed in the weſt; and he intimates that the conſternation into which the kingdom was thrown by this event, was a reaſon why it was performed but ſix times, and was in general ill received.

The following humorous ballad was written in ridicule of this drama, and in particular of Grabu's muſic to it.

From father Hopkins, whoſe vein did inſpire him,
[illegible] this rare ſhow to publick view;

Prentices,

The State of Innocence and Fall of Man is termed by him an opera: it is rather a tragedy in heroick rhyme, out of which the perſonages are ſuch as cannot decently

Prentices, fops, and their footmen admire him,
Thanks patron, painter, and monſieur *Grabu*.

Each actor on the ſtage his luck bewailing,
Finds that his loſs is infallibly true;
Smith, *Nokes*, and *Leigh* in a fever with railing,
Curſe poet, painter, and monſieur *Grabu*.

Betterton, *Betterton*, thy decorations,
And the machines were well written we knew;
But all the words were ſuch ſtuff we want patience,
And little better is monſieur *Grabu*.

D—— me, ſays *Underhill*, I'm out of two hundred,
Hoping that rainbows and peacocks would do;
Who thought infallible *Tom* could have blunder'd?
A plague upon him and monſieur *Grabu*.

Lane, thou haſt no applauſe for thy capers,
Though all without thee would make a man ſpew;
And a month hence will not pay for the tapers,
Spite of Jack Laureat and monſieur *Grabu*.

Boyes, thou would'ſt have thy ſkill thought univerſal,
Though thy dull ear be to muſick untrue;
Then whilſt we ſtrive to confute the Rehearſal,
Prithee learn thraſhing of monſieur *Grabu*.

With thy dull prefaces ſtill would'ſt thou treat us,
Striving to make thy dull bauble look fair;
So the horn'd herd of the city do cheat us,
Still moſt commending the worſt of their ware.

Leave making operas and writing lyricks,
Till thou haſt ears and canſt alter thy ſtrain;
Stick to thy talent of bold panegyrics,
And ſtill remember the breathing the vein.

Yet if thou thinkeſt the town will extol 'em,
Print thy dull notes, but be thrifty and wiſe;

Inſtead

cently be exhibited on the ſtage. ſ h production was foreſeen by Marvel, who writes thus to Milton:

Or if a work ſo infinite be ſpann'd,
Jealous I was leaſt ſome leſs ſkilful hand,
Such as diſquiet always what is well,
And by ill imitating would excel,
Might hence preſume the whole creation's day,
To change in ſcenes, and ſhow it in a play.

It is another of his haſty productions; for the heat of his imagination raiſed it in a month.

This compoſition is addreſſed to the princeſs of Modena, then dutcheſs of York, in a ſtrain of flattery which diſgraces genius, and which it was wonderful that any man that knew the meaning of his own words could uſe without ſelf-deteſtation. It is an attempt to mingle earth and heaven, by praiſing human excellence in the language of religion.

The preface contains an apology for heroick verſe and poetick licence; by which is meant not any liberty taken in contracting or extending words, but the uſe of bold fictions and ambitious figures.

The reaſon which he gives for printing what was never acted, cannot be overpaſſed: "I was induced "to it in my own defence, many hundred copies of it "being diſperſed abroad without my knowledge or "conſent, and every one gathering new faults, it be-

Inſtead of angels ſubſcrib'd for the volume *,
Take a ſh and ſhilling, and thank my advice.

In imitating thee this may be charming,
Gleaning from laureats is no ſhame at all;
And let this ſong be ſung next performing,
Elſe ten to one but the prices will fall.

* The Muſic to *Albion* and *Albanius* was publiſhed by a ſubſcription of *ten ſhillings* for each copy.

6 "cauſe

"came at length a libel againſt me." Theſe copies as they gathered faults were apparently manuſcript; and he lived in an age very unlike ours, if many hundred copies of fourteen hundred lines were likely to be tranſcribed. An author has a right to print his own works, and needs not ſeek an apology in falſehood; but he that could bear to write the dedication felt no pain in writing the preface.

Aureng Zebe is a tragedy founded on the actions of a great prince then reigning, but over nations not likely to employ their criticks upon the tranſactions of the Engliſh ſtage. If he had known and diſliked his own character, our trade was not in thoſe times ſecure from his reſentment. His country is at ſuch a diſtance, that the manners might be ſafely falſified, and the incidents feigned; for the remoteneſs of place is remarked by Racine, to afford the ſame conveniencies to a poet as length of time.

This play is written in rhyme; and has the appearance of being the moſt elaborate of all the dramas. The perſonages are imperial; but the dialogue is often domeſtick, and therefore ſuſceptible of ſentiments accommodated to familiar incidents. The complaint of life is celebrated, and there are many other paſſages that may be read with pleaſure.

This play is addreſſed to the earl of Mulgrave, afterwards duke of Buckingham, himſelf, if not a poet, yet a writer of verſes, and a critick. In this addreſs Dryden gave the firſt hints of his intention to write an epick poem. He mentions his deſign in terms ſo obſcure, that he ſeems afraid leſt his plan ſhould be purloined, as, he ſays, happened to him when he told it more plainly in his preface to Juvenal. "The deſign,"

ſays he, " you know is great, the ſtory Engliſh, and " neither too near the preſent times, nor too diſtant " from them."

All for Love, or the World well loſt, a tragedy founded upon the ſtory of Antony and Cleopatra, he tells us, *is the only play which he wrote for himſelf*; the reſt were given to the people. It is by univerſal conſent accounted the work in which he has admitted the feweſt improprieties of ſtyle or character; but it has one fault equal to many, though rather moral than critical, that by admitting the romantick omnipotence of Love, he has recommended as laudable and worthy of imitation that conduct which, through all ages, the good have cenſured as vicious, and the bad deſpiſed as fooliſh.

Of this play the prologue and the epilogue, though written upon the common topicks of malicious and ignorant criticiſm, and without any particular relation to the characters or incidents of the drama, are deſervedly celebrated for their elegance and ſpritelineſs.

Limberham, or the kind Keeper, is a comedy, which, after the third night, was prohibited as too indecent for the ſtage. What gave offence, was in the printing, as the author ſays, altered or omitted. Dryden confeſſes that its indecency was objected to; but Langbaine, who yet ſeldom favours him, imputes its expulſion to reſentment, becauſe it *ſo much expoſed the keeping part of the town.*

Oedipus is a tragedy formed by Dryden and Lee, in conjunction, from the works of Sophocles, Seneca, and Corneille. Dryden planned the ſcenes, and compoſed the firſt and third acts.

Don Sebaſtian is commonly eſteemed either the firſt or ſecond of his dramatick performances. It is too long to be all acted, and has many characters and many incidents;

incidents; and though it is not without ſallies of frantick dignity, and more noiſe than meaning, yet as it makes approaches to the poſſibilities of real life, and has ſome ſentiments which leave a ſtrong impreſſion, it continued long to attract attention. Amidſt the diſtreſſes of princes, and the viciſſitudes of empire, are inſerted ſeveral ſcenes which the writer intended for comick; but which, I ſuppoſe, that age did not much commend, and this would not endure. There are, however, paſſages of excellence univerſally acknowledged; the diſpute and the reconciliation of Dorax and Sebaſtian has always been admired.

This play was firſt acted in 1690, after Dryden had for ſome years diſcontinued dramatick poetry.

Amphitryon is a comedy derived from Plautus and Moliere. The dedication is dated Oct. 1690. This play ſeems to have ſucceeded at its firſt appearance; and was, I think, long conſidered as a very diverting entertainment.

Cleomenes is a tragedy, only remarkable as it occaſioned an incident related in the *Guardian*, and alluſively mentioned by Dryden in his preface. As he came out from the repreſentation, he was accoſted thus by ſome airy ſtripling: *Had I been left alone with a young beauty, I would not have ſpent my time like your Spartan.* *That, Sir,* ſaid Dryden, *perhaps is true; but give me leave to tell you, that you are no hero.*

King Arthur is another opera. It was the laſt work that Dryden performed for King Charles, who did not live to ſee it exhibited; and it does not ſeem to have been ever brought upon the ſtage *. In the dedication to the marquis of Halifax, there is a very elegant cha-

* This is a miſtake. It was ſet to muſic by Purcell, and well received, and is yet a favourite entertainment.

racter of Charles, and a pleaſing account of his latter life. When this was firſt brought upon the ſtage, news that the duke of Monmouth had landed was told in the theatre, upon which the company departed, and *Arthur* was exhibited no more.

His laſt drama was *Love triumphant*, a tragi-comedy. In his dedication to the earl of Saliſbury he mentions *the lowneſs of fortune to which he has voluntarily reduced himſelf, and of which he has no reaſon to be aſhamed.*

This play appeared in 1694. It is ſaid to have been unſucceſsful. The cataſtrophe, proceeding merely from a change of mind, is confeſſed by the author to be defective. Thus he began and ended his dramatick labours with ill ſucceſs.

From ſuch a number of theatrical pieces it will be ſuppoſed, by moſt readers, that he muſt have improved his fortune; at leaſt, that ſuch diligence with ſuch abilities muſt have ſet penury at defiance. But in Dryden's time the drama was very far from that univerſal approbation which it has now obtained. The play-houſe was abhorred by the Puritans, and avoided by thoſe who deſired the character of ſerionſneſs or decency. A grave lawyer would have debaſed his dignity, and a young trader would have impaired his credit, by appearing in thoſe manſions of diſſolute licentiouſneſs. The profits of the theatre, when ſo many claſſes of the people were deducted from the audience, were not great; and the poet had for a long time but a ſingle night. The firſt that had two nights was *Southern*; and the firſt that had three was *Rowe*. There were however, in thoſe days, arts of improving a poet's profit, which Dryden forbore to practiſe; and a play therefore ſeldom produced him more than a hundred pounds.

ppunds, by the accumulated gain of the third night, the dedication, and the copy.

Almoſt every piece had a dedication, written with ſuch elegance and luxuriance of praiſe, as neither haughtineſs nor avarice could be imagined able to reſiſt. But he ſeems to have made flattery too cheap. That praiſe is worth nothing of which the price is known.

To increaſe the value of his copies, he often accompanied his work with a preface of criticiſm; a kind of learning then almoſt new in the Engliſh language, and which he, who had conſidered with great accuracy the principles of writing, was able to diſtribute copiouſly as occaſions aroſe. By theſe diſſertations the publick judgment muſt have been much improved; and Swift, who converſed with Dryden, relates that he regretted the ſucceſs of his own inſtructions, and found his readers made ſuddenly too ſkilful to be eaſily ſatisfied.

His prologues had ſuch reputation, that for ſome time a play was conſidered as leſs likely to be well received, if ſome of his verſes did not introduce it. The price of a prologue was two guineas, till being aſked to write one for Mr. Southern, he demanded three; *Not*, ſaid he, *young man, out of diſreſpect to you, but the players have had my goods too cheap.*

Though he declares, that in his own opinion his genius was not dramatick, he had great confidence in his own fertility; for he is ſaid to have engaged, by contract, to furniſh four plays a year.

It is certain that in one year, 1678, he publiſhed *All for Love*, *Aſſignation*, two parts of the *Conqueſt of Granada*, *Sir Martin Marr-all*, and the *State of Innocence*, ſix complete plays; with a celerity of performance, which, though all Langbaine's charges of plagiariſm

ſhould be allowed, ſhews ſuch facility of compoſition, ſuch readineſs of language, and ſuch copiouſneſs of ſentiment, as, ſince the time of Lopez de Vega, perhaps no other author has ever poſſeſſed.

He did not enjoy his reputation, however great, nor his profits, however ſmall, without moleſtation. He had criticks to endure, and rivals to oppoſe. The two moſt diſtinguiſhed wits of the nobility, the duke of Buckingham and earl of Rocheſter, declared themſelves his enemies.

Buckingham characteriſed him in 1671, by the name of *Bayes* in the *Rehearſal*; a farce which he is ſaid to have written with the aſſiſtance of Butler the author of *Hudibras*, Martin Clifford of the Charterhouſe, and Dr. Sprat, the friend of Cowley, then his chaplain. Dryden and his friends laughed at the length of time, and the number of hands employed upon this performance; in which, though by ſome artifice of action it yet keeps poſſeſſion of the ſtage, it is not poſſible now to find any thing that might not have been written without ſo long delay, or a confederacy ſo numerous.

To adjuſt the minute events of literary hiſtory, is tedious and troubleſome; it requires indeed no great force of underſtanding, but often depends upon enquiries which there is no opportunity of making, or is to be fetched from books and pamphlets not always at hand.

The *Rehearſal* was played in 1671, and yet is repreſented as ridiculing paſſages in the *Conqueſt of Granada* and *Aſſignation*, which were not publiſhed till 1678, in *Marriage Alamode* publiſhed in 1673, and in *Tyrannick Love* of 1677. Theſe contradictions ſhew how raſhly ſatire is applied.

It is ſaid that this farce was originally intended againſt Davenant, who in the firſt draught was characteriſed by the name of *Bilboa*. Davenant had been a ſoldier and an adventurer.

There is one paſſage in the *Rehearſal* ſtill remaining, which ſeems to have related originally to Davenant. *Bayes* hurts his noſe, and comes in with brown paper applied to the bruiſe; how this affected Dryden, does not appear. Davenant's noſe had ſuffered ſuch diminution by miſhaps among the women, that a patch upon that part evidently denoted him.

It is ſaid likewiſe that Sir Robert Howard was once meant. The deſign was probably to ridicule the reigning poet, whoever he might be.

Much of the perſonal ſatire, to which it might owe its firſt reception, is now loſt or obſcured. *Bayes* probably imitated the dreſs, and mimicked the manner, of Dryden; the cant words which are ſo often in his mouth may be ſuppoſed to have been Dryden's habitual phraſes, or cuſtomary exclamations. *Bayes*, when he is to write, is blooded and purged: this, as Lamotte relates himſelf to have heard, was the real practice of the poet.

There were other ſtrokes in the *Rehearſal* by which malice was gratified; the debate between Love and Honour, which keeps prince *Volſcius* in a ſingle boot, is ſaid to have alluded to the miſconduct of the duke of Ormond, who loſt Dublin to the rebels while he was toying with a miſtreſs.

The earl of Rocheſter, to ſuppreſs the reputation of Dryden, took Settle into his protection, and endeavoured to perſuade the publick that its approbation had been to that time miſplaced. Settle was a while in

high reputation; his *Empreſs of Morocco*, having firſt delighted the town, was carried in triumph to Whitehall, and played by the ladies of the court. Now was the poetical meteor at the higheſt; the next moment began its fall. Rocheſter withdrew his patronage; ſeeming reſolved, ſays one of his biographers, *to have a judgement contrary to that of the town.* Perhaps being unable to endure any reputation beyond a certain height, even when he had himſelf contributed to raiſe it.

Neither criticks nor rivals did Dryden much miſchief, unleſs they gained from his own temper the power of vexing him, which his frequent burſts of reſentment give reaſon to ſuſpect. He is always angry at ſome paſt, or afraid of ſome future cenſure; but he leſſens the ſmart of his wounds by the balm of his own approbation, and endeavours to repel the ſhafts of criticiſm by oppoſing a ſhield of adamantine confidence.

The perpetual accuſation produced againſt him, was that of plagiariſm, againſt which he never attempted any vigorous defence; for, though he was perhaps ſometimes injuriouſly cenſured, he would by denying part of the charge have confeſſed the reſt; and as his adverſaries had the proof in their own hands, he, who knew that wit had little power againſt facts, wiſely left, in that perplexity which generality produces, a queſtion which it was his intereſt to ſuppreſs, and which, unleſs provoked by vindication, few were likely to examine.

Though the life of a writer, from about thirty-five to ſixty-three, may be ſuppoſed to have been ſufficiently buſied by the compoſition of eight and twenty pieces

for the ſtage, Dryden found room in the ſame ſpace for many other undertakings.

But, how much ſoever he wrote, he was at leaſt once ſuſpected of writing more; for in 1679 a paper of verſes, called *an Eſſay on Satire*, was ſhewn about in manuſcript, by which the earl of Rocheſter, the dutcheſs of Portſmouth, and others, were ſo much provoked, that, as was ſuppoſed, for the actors were never diſcovered, they procured Dryden, whom they ſuſpected as the author, to be waylaid and beaten. This incident is mentioned by the duke of Buckinghamſhire, the true writer, in his Art of Poetry; where he ſays of Dryden,

> Though prais'd and beaten for another's rhymes,
> His own deſerves as great applauſe ſometimes.

His reputation in time was ſuch, that his name was thought neceſſary to the ſucceſs of every poetical or literary performance, and therefore he was engaged to contribute ſomething, whatever it might be, to many publications. He prefixed the Life of Polybius to the tranſlation of Sir Henry Sheers; and thoſe of Lucian and Plutarch to verſions of their works by different hands. Of the Engliſh Tacitus he tranſlated the firſt book; and, if Gordon be credited, tranſlated it from the French. Such a charge can hardly be mentioned without ſome degree of indignation; but it is not, I ſuppoſe, ſo much to be inferred, that Dryden wanted the literature neceſſary to the peruſal of Tacitus, as that, conſidering himſelf as hidden in a crowd, he had no awe of the publick; and writing merely for money, was contented to get it by the neareſt way.

In 1680, the Epiſtles of Ovid being tranſlated by the poets of the time, among which one was the work

work of Dryden, and another of Dryden and Lord Mulgrave, it was neceſſary to introduce them by a preface; and Dryden, who on ſuch occaſions was regularly ſummoned, prefixed a diſcourſe upon tranſlation, which was then ſtruggling for the liberty that it now enjoys. Why it ſhould find any difficulty in breaking the ſhackles of verbal interpretation, which muſt for ever debar it from elegance, it would be difficult to conjecture, were not the power of prejudice every day obſerved. The authority of Jonſon, Sandys, and Holiday, had fixed the judgement of the nation; and it was not eaſily believed that a better way could be found than they had taken, though Fanſhaw, Denham, Waller, and Cowley, had tried to give examples of a different practice.

In 1681, Dryden became yet more conſpicuous by uniting politicks with poetry, in the memorable ſatire called *Abſalom and Achitophel*, written againſt the faction which, by Lord Shafteſbury's incitement, ſet the duke of Monmouth at its head.

Of this poem, in which perſonal ſatire was applied to the ſupport of publick principles, and in which therefore every mind was intereſted, the reception was eager, and the ſale ſo large, that my father, an old bookſeller, told me, he had not known it equalled but by *Sacheverell's* trial.

The reaſon of this general peruſal Addiſon has attempted to derive from the delight which the mind feels in the inveſtigation of ſecrets; and thinks that curioſity to decypher the names procured readers to the poem. There is no need to enquire why thoſe verſes were read, which to all the attractions of wit, elegance, and harmony, added the co-operation of all the

the factious paſſions, and filled every mind with triumph or reſentment.

It could not be ſuppoſed that all the provocation given by Dryden would be endured without reſiſtance or reply. Both his perſon and his party were expoſed in their turns to the ſhafts of ſatire, which, though neither ſo well pointed nor perhaps ſo well aimed, undoubtedly drew blood.

One of theſe poems is called *Dryden's Satire on his Muſe*; aſcribed, though, as Pope ſays, falſely, to *Somers*, who was afterwards Chancellor. The poem, whoſe ſoever it was, has much virulence, and ſome ſpritelineſs. The writer tells all the ill that he can collect both of Dryden and his friends.

The poem of *Abſalom and Achitophel* had two anſwers, now both forgotten; one called *Azaria and Huſhai*; the other *Abſalom ſenior*. Of theſe hoſtile compoſitions, Dryden apparently imputes *Abſalom ſenior* to *Settle*, by quoting in his verſes againſt him the ſecond line. *Azaria and Huſhai* was, as *Wood* ſays, imputed to him, though it is ſomewhat unlikely that he ſhould write twice on the ſame occaſion. This is a difficulty which I cannot remove, for want of a minuter knowledge of poetical tranſactions.

The ſame year he publiſhed the *Medal*, of which the ſubject is a medal ſtruck on lord Shafteſbury's eſcape from a proſecution, by the *ignoramus* of a grand jury of Londoners.

In both poems he maintains the ſame principles, and ſaw them both attacked by the ſame antagoniſt. Elkanah Settle, who had anſwered *Abſalom*, appeared with equal courage in oppoſition to the *Medal*, and publiſhed

liſhed an anſwer called *The Medal reverſed*, with ſo much ſucceſs in both encounters, that he left the palm doubtful, and divided the ſuffrages of the nation. Such are the revolutions of fame, or ſuch is the prevalence of faſhion, that the man whoſe works have not yet been thought to deſerve the care of collecting them; who died forgotten in an hoſpital; and whoſe latter years were ſpent in contriving ſhows for fairs, and carrying an elegy or epithalamium, of which the beginning and end were occaſionally varied, but the intermediate parts were always the ſame, to every houſe where there was a funeral or a wedding; might, with truth, have had inſcribed upon his ſtone,

Here lies the Rival and Antagoniſt of Dryden.

Settle was, for this rebellion, ſeverely chaſtiſed by Dryden under the name of *Doeg*, in the ſecond part of *Abſalom and Achitophel*, and was perhaps for his factious audacity made the city poet, whoſe annual office was to deſcribe the glories of the Mayor's day. Of theſe bards he was the laſt, and ſeems not much to have deſerved even this degree of regard, if it was paid to his political opinions; for he afterwards wrote a panegyrick on the virtues of judge Jefferies; and what more could have been done by the meaneſt zealot for prerogative?

Of tranſlated fragments, or occaſional poems, to enumerate the titles, or ſettle the dates, would be tedious, with little uſe. It may be obſerved, that as Dryden's genius was commonly excited by ſome perſonal regard, he rarely writes upon a general topick.

Soon after the acceſſion of king James, when the deſign of reconciling the nation to the church of Rome became apparent, and the religion of the court gave the only efficacious title to its favours, Dryden declared himſelf a convert to popery. This at any

obſ

other time might have paſſed with little cenſure. Sir *Kenelm Digby* embraced popery; the two *Rainolds* reciprocally converted one another *; and *Chillingworth* himſelf was a while ſo entangled in the wilds of controverſy, as to retire for quiet to an infallible church. If men of argument and ſtudy can find ſuch difficulties, or ſuch motives, as may either unite them to the church of Rome, or detain them in uncertainty, there can be no wonder that a man, who perhaps never enquired why he was a proteſtant, ſhould by an artful and experienced diſputant be made a papiſt, overborn by the ſudden violence of new and unexpected arguments, or deceived by a repreſentation which ſhews only the doubts on one part, and only the evidence on the other.

That converſion will always be ſuſpected that apparently concurs with intereſt. He that never finds his error till it hinders his progreſs towards wealth or honour, will not be thought to love Truth only for herſelf. Yet it may eaſily happen that information may come at a commodious time; and as truth and intereſt are not by any fatal neceſſity at variance, that one may by accident introduce the other. When opinions are ſtruggling into popularity, the arguments by which they are oppoſed or defended become more known; and he that changes his profeſſion would perhaps have changed it before, with the like opportunities of inſtruction. This was the then ſtate of popery; every artifice was uſed to ſhew it in its faireſt form; and it muſt be owned to be a

* Dr. John Reynolds, who lived temp. Jac. I. was at firſt a zealous Papiſt, and his brother William as earneſt a Proteſtant, but by mutual diſputation each converted the other. Vide Fuller's Church Hiſtory, book X. p. 47.

religion

religion of external appearance ſufficiently attractive.

It is natural to hope that a comprehenſive is likewiſe an elevated ſoul, and that whoever is wiſe is alſo honeſt. I am willing to believe that Dryden, having employed his mind, active as it was, upon different ſtudies, and filled it, capacious as it was, with other materials, came unprovided to the controverſy, and wanted rather ſkill to diſcover the right than virtue to maintain it. But enquiries into the heart are not for man; we muſt now leave him to his Judge.

The prieſts, having ſtrengthened their cauſe by ſo powerful an adherent, were not long before they brought him into action. They engaged him to defend the controverſial papers found in the ſtrong-box of Charles the Second, and, what yet was harder, to defend them againſt Stillingfleet.

With hopes of promoting popery, he was employed to tranſlate Maimbourg's Hiſtory of the League; which he publiſhed with a large introduction. His name is likewiſe prefixed to the Engliſh Life of Francis Xavier; but I know not that he ever owned himſelf the tranſlator. Perhaps the uſe of his name was a pious fraud, which however ſeems not to have had much effect; for neither of the books, I believe, was ever popular.

The verſion of Xavier's Life is commended by Brown, in a pamphlet not written to flatter; and the occaſion of it is ſaid to have been, that the Queen, when ſhe ſolicited a ſon, made vows to him as her tutelary ſaint.

He

He was ſuppoſed to have undertaken to tranſlate *Varillas's Hiſtory of Hereſies*; and, when *Burnet* publiſhed Remarks upon it, to have written an *Anſwer*; upon which Burnet makes the following obſervation:

"I have been informed from England, that a gen-
"tleman, who is famous both for poetry and ſeveral
"other things, had ſpent three months in tranſlating
"M. Varillas's Hiſtory; but that, as ſoon as my Re-
"flections appeared, he diſcontinued his labour, find-
"ing the credit of his author was gone. Now if he
"thinks it is recovered by his Anſwer, he will perhaps
"go on with his tranſlation; and this may be, for
"aught I know, as good an entertainment for him as
"the converſation that he had ſet on between the
"Hinds and Panthers, and all the reſt of animals, for
"whom M. Varillas may ſerve well enough as an
"author: and this hiſtory and that poem are ſuch
"extraordinary things of their kind, that it will be
"but ſuitable to ſee the author of the worſt poem be-
"come likewiſe the tranſlator of the worſt hiſtory
"that the age has produced. If his grace and his
"wit improve both proportionably, he will hardly
"find that he has gained much by the change he
"has made, from having no religion to chuſe one
"of the worſt. It is true, he had ſomewhat to ſink
"from in matter of wit; but as for his morals, it is
"ſcarce poſſible for him to grow a worſe man than
"he was. He has lately wreaked his malice on me
"for ſpoiling his three months labour; but in it he
"has done me all the honour that any man can receive
"from him, which is to be railed at by him. If I
"had ill-nature enough to prompt me to wiſh a very
"bad wiſh for him, it ſhould be, that he would go on

"and

" and finiſh his tranſlation. By that it will appear, " whether the Engliſh nation, which is the moſt com- " petent judge in this matter, has, upon the ſeeing " our debate, pronounced in M. Varillas's favour, or " in mine. It is true, Mr. D. will ſuffer a little by it; " but at leaſt it will ſerve to keep him in from other " extravagancies; and if he gains little honour by " this work, yet he cannot loſe ſo much by it as " he has done by his laſt employment."

Having probably felt his own inferiority in theological controverſy, he was deſirous of trying whether, by bringing poetry to aid his arguments, he might become a more efficacious defender of his new profeſſion. To reaſon in verſe was, indeed, one of his powers; but ſubtilty and harmony united are ſtill feeble, when oppoſed to truth.

Actuated therefore by zeal for Rome, or hope of fame, he publiſhed the *Hind and Panther*, a poem in which the church of Rome, figured by the milk-white *Hind*, defends her tenets againſt the church of England, repreſented by the *Panther*, a beaſt beautiful, but ſpotted.

A fable which exhibits two beaſts talking Theology, appears at once full of abſurdity; and it was accordingly ridiculed in the *City Mouſe* and *Country Mouſe*, a parody, written by Montague, afterwards earl of Halifax, and Prior, who then gave the firſt ſpecimen of his abilities.

The converſion of ſuch a man, at ſuch a time, was not likely to paſs uncenſured. Three dialogues were publiſhed by the facetious *Thomas Brown*, of which the two firſt were called *Reaſons of Mr. Bayes's changing his religion:* and the third, *The Reaſons of Mr. Hayns the player's converſion and re-converſion.* The firſt was printed

in 1688, the ſecond not till 1690, the third in 1691. The clamour ſeems to have been long continued, and the ſubject to have ſtrongly fixed the publick attention.

In the two firſt dialogues *Bayes* is brought into the company of *Crites* and *Eugenius*, with whom he had formerly debated on dramatick poetry. The two talkers in the third are Mr. *Bayes* and Mr. *Hains*.

Brown was a man not deficient in literature, nor deſtitute of fancy; but he ſeems to have thought it the pinnacle of excellence to be *a merry fellow*; and therefore laid out his powers upon ſmall jeſts or groſs buffoonery, ſo that his performances have little intrinſick value, and were read only while they were recommended by the novelty of the event that occaſioned them.

Theſe dialogues are like his other works: what ſenſe or knowledge they contain, is diſgraced by the garb in which it is exhibited. One great ſource of pleaſure is to call Dryden *little Bayes*. *Ajax*, who happens to be mentioned, is *he that wore as many cow-hides upon his ſhield as would have furniſhed half the king's army with ſhoe-leather*.

Being aſked whether he has ſeen the *Hind and Panther*, Crites anſwers: *Seen it! Mr.* Bayes, *why I can ſtir no where but it purſues me; it haunts me worſe than a pewter-buttoned ſerjeant does a decayed cit. Sometimes I meet it in a band-box, when my laundreſs brings home my linen; ſometimes, whether I will or no, it lights my pipe at a coffee-houſe; ſometimes it ſurpriſes me in a trunkmaker's ſhop; and ſometimes it refreſhes my memory for me on the backſide of a Chancery-lane parcel. For your comfort too, Mr.* Bayes, *I have not only ſeen it, as you may perceive, but have read it too, and can quote it as freely upon occaſion as a frugal tradeſman can quote that noble treatiſe*

the Worth of a Penny *to his extravagant 'prentice, that revels in ſtewed apples, and penny cuſtards.*

The whole animation of theſe compoſitions ariſes from a profuſion of ludicrous and affected compariſons. *To ſecure one's chaſtity,* ſays Bayes, *little more is neceſſary than to leave off a correſpondence with the other ſex, which, to a wiſe man, is no greater a puniſhment than it would be to a fanatic parſon to be forbid* ſeeing *the* Cheats *and the* Committee; *or for my Lord Mayor and Aldermen to be interdicted the ſight of the* London Cuckolds.—This is the general ſtrain, and therefore I ſhall be eaſily excuſed the labour of more tranſcription.

Brown does not wholly forget paſt tranſactions: *You began,* ſays Crites *to* Bayes, *with a very indifferent religion, and have not mended the matter in your laſt choice. It was but reaſon that your Muſe, which appeared firſt in a Tyrant's quarrel, ſhould employ her laſt efforts to juſtify the uſurpations of the* Hind.

Next year the nation was ſummoned to celebrate the birth of the Prince. Now was the time for Dryden to rouſe his imagination, and ſtrain his voice. Happy days were at hand, and he was willing to enjoy and diffuſe the anticipated bleſſings. He publiſhed a poem, filled with predictions of greatneſs and proſperity; predictions of which it is not neceſſary to tell how they have been verified.

A few months paſſed after theſe joyful notes, and every bloſſom of popiſh hope was blaſted for ever by the Revolution. A papiſt now could be no longer Laureat. The revenue, which he had enjoyed with ſo much pride and praiſe, was transferred to Shadwell, an old enemy, whom he had formerly ſtigmatiſed by the name of *Og*. Dryden could not decently complain that he was depoſed; but ſeemed very angry that Shad-

well

well ſucceeded him, and has therefore celebrated the intruder's inauguration in a poem exquiſitely ſatirical, called *Mac Flecknoe*; of which the *Dunciad*, as Pope himſelf declares, is an imitation, though more extended in its plan, and more diverſified in its incidents.

It is related by Prior, that Lord Dorſet, when, as chamberlain, he was conſtrained to eject Dryden from his office, gave him from his own purſe an allowance equal to the ſalary. This is no romantick or incredible act of generoſity; an hundred a year is often enough given to claims leſs cogent, by men leſs famed for liberality. Yet Dryden always repreſented himſelf as ſuffering under a public infliction; and once particularly demands reſpect for the patience with which he endured the loſs of his little fortune. His patron might, indeed, enjoin him to ſuppreſs his bounty; but if he ſuffered nothing, he ſhould not have complained.

During the ſhort reign of king James he had written nothing for the ſtage, being, in his opinion, more profitably employed in controverſy and flattery. Of praiſe he might perhaps have been leſs laviſh without inconvenience, for James was never ſaid to have much regard for poetry: he was to be flattered only by adopting his religion.

Times were now changed: Dryden was no longer the court-poet, and was to look back for ſupport to his former trade; and having waited about two years, either conſidering himſelf as diſcountenanced by the publick, or perhaps expecting a ſecond Revolution, he produced *Don Sebaſtian* in 1690; and in the next four years four dramas more.

In 1693 appeared a new verſion of Juvenal and Perſius. Of Juvenal he tranſlated the firſt, third, ſixth, tenth,

tenth, and ſixteenth ſatires; and of Perſius the whole work. On this occaſion he introduced his two ſons to the publick, as nurſelings of the Muſes. The fourteenth of Juvenal was the work of John, and the ſeventh of Charles Dryden. He prefixed a very ample preface in the form of a dedication to lord Dorſet; and there gives an account of the deſign which he had once formed to write an epic poem on the actions either of Arthur or the Black Prince. He conſidered the epick as neceſſarily including ſome kind of ſupernatural agency, and had imagined a new kind of contest between the guardian angels of kingdoms, of whom he conceived that each might be repreſented zealous for his charge, without any intended oppoſition to the purpoſes of the Supreme Being, of which all created minds muſt in part be ignorant.

This is the moſt reaſonable ſcheme of celeſtial interpoſition that ever was formed. The ſurprizes and terrors of enchantments, which have ſucceeded to the intrigues and oppoſitions of pagan deities, afford very ſtriking ſcenes, and open a vaſt extent to the imagination; but, as Boileau obſerves, and Boileau will be ſeldom found miſtaken, with this incurable defect. that in a conteſt between heaven and hell we know at the beginning which is to prevail; for this reaſon we follow Rinaldo to the enchanted wood with more curioſity than terror.

In the ſcheme of Dryden there is one great difficulty, which yet he would perhaps have had addreſs enough to ſurmount. In a war juſtice can be but on one ſide; and to entitle the hero to the protection of [illegible] he muſt fight in defence of indubitable right. How ſome of the celeſtial beings, thus oppoſed to each other, muſt have been repreſented as defending guilt.

Were

That this poem was never written, is reaſonably to be lamented. It would doubtleſs have improved our numbers, and enlarged our language, and might perhaps have contributed by pleaſing inſtruction to rectify our opinions, and purify our manners.

What he required as the indiſpenſable condition of ſuch an undertaking, a publick ſtipend, was not likely in thoſe times to be obtained. Riches were not become familiar to us, nor had the nation yet learned to be liberal.

This plan he charged Blackmore with ſtealing; only, ſays he, *the guardian angels of kingdoms were machines too ponderous for him to manage.*

In 1694, he began the moſt laborious and difficult of all his works, the tranſlation of Virgil; from which he borrowed two months, that he might turn Freſnoy's Art of Painting into Engliſh proſe. The preface, which he boaſts to have written in twelve mornings, exhibits a parallel of poetry and painting, with a miſcellaneous collection of critical remarks, ſuch as coſt a mind ſtored like his no labour to produce them.

In 1697, he publiſhed his verſion of the works of Virgil; and that no opportunity of profit might be loſt, dedicated the Paſtorals to the lord Clifford, the Georgics to the earl of Cheſterfield, and the Eneid to the earl of Mulgrave. This œconomy of flattery, at once laviſh and diſcreet, did not paſs without obſervation.

This tranſlation was cenſured by Milbourne, a clergyman, ſtyled by Pope *the faireſt of criticks*, becauſe he exhibited his own verſion to be compared with that which he condemned.

His laſt work was his Fables, publiſhed in 1699, in conſequence, as is ſuppoſed, of a contract now in the

hands of Mr. Tonſon; by which he obliged himſelf, in conſideration of three hundred pounds, to finiſh for the preſs ten thouſand verſes.

In this volume is compriſed the well-known ode on St. Cecilia's day, which, as appeared by a letter communicated to Dr. Birch, he ſpent a fortnight in compoſing and correcting *. But what is this to the patience and diligence of Boileau, whoſe *Equivoque*, a poem of only three hundred forty-ſix lines, took from his life eleven months to write it, and three years to reviſe it!

Part of this book of Fables is the firſt Iliad in Engliſh, intended as a ſpecimen of a verſion of the whole. Conſidering into what hands Homer was to fall, the reader cannot but rejoice that this project went no further.

The time was now at hand which was to put an end to all his ſchemes and labours. On the firſt of May 1701, having been ſome time, as he tells us, a cripple in his limbs, he died in Gerard-ſtreet, of a mortification in his leg.

There is extant a wild ſtory relating to ſome vexatious events that happened at his funeral, which, at

* It is one of the deſiderata in muſical hiſtory, who it was that firſt ſet this ode to muſic. It is ſaid that Purcell declined it, being deterred by the ſublimity of the poetry; but the better opinion is, that it was not written till after his death. Certain it is, that it was not printed till after March 1698, and that Purcell died in November 1695. Clayton, who compoſed the muſic to Mr. Addiſon's Rosamond, ſet alſo this ode of Dryden, and performed it in 1711 at the great room in York Buildings, which he and Sir Richard Steele had taken for the purpoſe of entertaining the town with concerts; but it met with ſuch a reception as all Clayton's muſic deſerved, and has never juſtice done to it till Mr. Handel compoſed and performed it under the name of Alexander's Feaſt.

the

the end of Congreve's Life, by a writer of I know not what credit, are thus related, as I find the account transferred to a biographical dictionary:

"Mr. Dryden dying on the Wedneſday morning, "Dr. Thomas Sprat, then biſhop of Rocheſter and "dean of Weſtminſter, ſent the next day to the lady "Elizabeth Howard, Mr. Dryden's widow, that he "would make a preſent of the ground, which was "forty pounds, with all the other Abbey-fees. The "lord Halifax likewiſe ſent to the lady Elizabeth, "and Mr. Charles Dryden her ſon, that, if they would "give him leave to bury Mr. Dryden, he would inter "him with a gentleman's private funeral, and after-"wards beſtow five hundred pounds on a monument in "the Abbey; which, as they had no reaſon to refuſe, "they accepted. On the Saturday following the com-"pany came: the corpſe was put into a velvet hearſe, "and eighteen mourning coaches, filled with com-"pany, attended. When they were juſt ready to "move, the lord Jefferies, ſon of the lord chan-"cellor Jefferies, with ſome of his rakiſh compa-"nions coming by, aſked whoſe funeral it was: and "being told Mr. Dryden's, he ſaid, 'What, ſhall "Dryden, the greateſt honour and ornament of the "nation, be buried after this private manner! No, "gentlemen, let all that loved Mr. Dryden, and ho-"nour his memory, alight and join with me in gain-"ing my lady's conſent to let me have the honour of "his interment, which ſhall be after another manner "than this; and I will beſtow a thouſand pounds on a "monument in the Abbey for him.' The gentlemen "in the coaches, not knowing of the biſhop of Ro-"cheſter's favour, nor of the lord Halifax's generous

" deſign (they both having, out of reſpect to the fa-
" mily, enjoined the lady Elizabeth and her ſon to
" keep their favour concealed to the world, and let it
" paſs for their own expence), readily came out of
" the coaches, and attended lord Jefferies up to
" the lady's bedſide, who was then ſick; he re-
" peated the purport of what he had before ſaid;
" but ſhe abſolutely refuſing, he fell on his knees,
" vowing never to riſe till his requeſt was granted.
" The reſt of the company by his deſire kneeled alſo;
" and the lady, being under a ſudden ſurprize, fainted
" away. As ſoon as ſhe recovered her ſpeech, ſhe
" cried, *No, no.* Enough, gentlemen, replied he; my
" lady is very good, ſhe ſays, *Go, go.* She repeated
" her former words with all her ſtrength, but in vain;
" for her feeble voice was loſt in their acclamations
" of joy; and the lord Jefferies ordered the hearſemen
" to carry the corpſe to Mr. Ruſſel's, an undertaker's
" in Cheapſide, and leave it there till he ſhould ſend
" orders for the embalment, which, he added, ſhould
" be after the royal manner. His directions were
" obeyed, the company diſperſed, and lady Eliza-
" beth and her ſon remained inconſolable. The next
" day Mr. Charles Dryden waited on the lord Halifax
" and the biſhop, to excuſe his mother and himſelf,
" by relating the real truth. But neither his lord-
" ſhip nor the biſhop would admit of any plea; eſpe-
" cially the latter, who had the Abbey lighted, the
" ground opened, the choir attending, an anthem ready
" ſet, and himſelf waiting for ſome time without any
" corpſe to bury. The undertaker, after three days
" expectance of orders for embalment without receiv-
" ing any, waited on the lord Jefferies; who pretending
" ignorance of the matter, turned it off with an ill-

" natured

"natured jeſt, ſaying, that thoſe who obſerved the "orders of a drunken frolick deſerved no better; that "he remembered nothing at all of it; and that he "might do what he pleaſed with the corpſe. Upon "this, the undertaker waited upon the lady Elizabeth "and her ſon, and threatened to bring the corpſe "home, and ſet it before the door. They deſired a "day's reſpite, which was granted. Mr. Charles "Dryden wrote a handſome letter to the lord Jef- "feries, who returned it with this cool anſwer, "'That he knew nothing of the matter, and would "be troubled no more about it.' He then addreſſed "the lord Halifax and the biſhop of Rocheſter, who "abſolutely refuſed to do any thing in it. In this "diſtreſs Dr. Garth ſent for the corpſe to the College "of Phyſicians, and propoſed a funeral by ſub- "ſcription, to which himſelf ſet a moſt noble ex- "ample. At laſt a day, about three weeks after "Mr. Dryden's deceaſe, was appointed for the inter- "ment: Dr. Garth pronounced a fine Latin oration, at "the College, over the corpſe; which was attended "to the Abbey by a numerous train of coaches. "When the funeral was over, Mr. Charles Dryden "ſent a challenge to the lord Jefferies, who refuſing "to anſwer it, he ſent ſeveral others, and went often "himſelf; but could neither get a letter delivered, "nor admittance to ſpeak to him: which ſo incenſed "him, that he reſolved, ſince his lordſhip refuſed to "anſwer him like a gentleman, that he would watch "an opportunity to meet, and fight off-hand, though "with all the rules of honour; which his lordſhip hear- "ing, left the town: and Mr. Charles Dryden could "never have the ſatisfaction of meeting him, though he "ſought it till his death with the utmoſt application."

This

This ſtory I once intended to omit, as it appears with no great evidence; nor have I met with any confirmation, but in a letter of Farquhar, and he only relates that the funeral of Dryden was tumultuary and confuſed *.

Suppoſing the ſtory true, we may remark, that the gradual change of manners, though imperceptible in the proceſs, appears great when different times, and thoſe not very diſtant, are compared. If at this time a young drunken Lord ſhould interrupt the pompous regularity of a magnificent funeral, what would be the event, but that he would be juſtled out of the way, and compelled to be quiet? If he ſhould thruſt himſelf into a houſe, he would be ſent roughly away; and what is yet more to the honour of the preſent time, I believe that thoſe who had ſubſcribed to the funeral of a man like Dryden, would not, for ſuch an accident, have withdrawn their contributions.

He was buried among the poets in Weſtminſter Abbey, where, though the duke of Newcaſtle had, in a general dedication prefixed by Congreve to his dra-

* An earlier account of Dryden's funeral than that above cited, though without the circumſtances that preceded it, is given by Edward Ward, who in his London Spy, publiſhed in 1706, relates, that on the occaſion there was a performance of ſolemn Muſic at the College, and that in the proceſſion which himſelf ſaw, ſtanding at the end of Chancery-lane, Fleet-ſtreet, there was a concert of hautboys and trumpets. The day of Dryden's interment, he ſays, was Monday the [illegible]th of May, which according to Johnſon was twelve days after his deceaſe, and ſhews how long his funeral was in ſuſpenſe. Ward knew not that the expence of it was defrayed by ſubſcription; but compliments lord Jefferies for ſo pious an undertaking. He alſo ſays, that the cauſe of Dryden's death was an inflammation in his toe, occaſioned by the fleſh growing over the nail, which being neglected, produced a mortification in his leg.

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matick works, accepted thanks for his intention of erecting him a monument, he lay long without diſtinction, till the duke of Buckinghamſhire gave him a tablet, inſcribed only with the name of DRYDEN *.

He married the lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of the earl of Berkſhire, with circumſtances, according to the ſatire imputed to lord Somers, not very honourable to either party: by her he had three ſons, Charles, John, and Henry. Charles was uſher of the palace to pope Clement the XIth; and, viſiting England in 1704, was drowned in an attempt to ſwim croſs the Thames at Windſor.

John was author of a comedy called *The Huſband his own Cuckold.* He is ſaid to have died at Rome. Henry entered into ſome religious order. It is ſome proof of Dryden's ſincerity in his ſecond religion, that he taught it to his ſons. A man conſcious of hypocritical profeſſion in himſelf, is not likely to convert others; and as his ſons were qualified in 1693 to appear among the tranſlators of Juvenal, they muſt have been taught ſome religion before their father's change.

* My author's meaning here is very obſcure. We know of no other tablet than that which makes part of an expenſive and very elegant monument, which, if the inſcription thereon ſpeaks truth, was erected by Sheffield duke of Buckingham, who was moved to it by a hint in Mr. Pope's epitaph for Rowe: the following inſcription was intended for it:

This Sheffield rais'd; the ſacred duſt below
Was Dryden once: the reſt who does not know?

but the author changed it to this:

J. DRYDEN,
Natus 1632, Mortuus Maij 1, 1700.
JOANNES SHEFFIELD, DUX BUCKINGHAMIENSIS, POSUIT, 1720.

Of

Of the perſon of Dryden I know not any account; of his mind, the portrait which has been left by Congreve, who knew him with great familiarity, is ſuch as adds our love of his manners to our admiration of his genius. "He was," we are told, "of a nature exceedingly humane and compaſſionate, ready to forgive injuries, and capable of a ſincere reconciliation with thoſe that had offended him. His friendſhip, where he profeſſed it, went beyond his profeſſions. He was of a very eaſy, of very pleaſing acceſs; but ſomewhat ſlow, and, as it were, diffident in his advances to others: he had that in his nature which abhorred intruſion into any ſociety whatever. He was therefore leſs known, and conſequently his character became more liable to miſapprehenſions and miſrepreſentations: he was very modeſt, and very eaſily to be diſcountenanced in his approaches to his equals or ſuperiors. As his reading had been very extenſive, ſo was he very happy in a memory tenacious of every thing that he had read. He was not more poſſeſſed of knowledge than he was communicative of it; but then his communication was by no means pedantick, or impoſed upon the converſation, but juſt ſuch and went ſo far as, by the natural turn of the converſation in which he was engaged, it was neceſſarily promoted or required. He was extremely ready, and gentle in his correction of the errors of any writer who thought fit to conſult him, and full as ready and patient to admit of the reprehenſions of others, in reſpect of his own overſights or miſtakes."

To this account of Congreve nothing can be objected but the fondneſs of friendſhip; and to have exerted that tondneſs in ſuch a mind is no ſmall degree

of

of praiſe. The diſpoſition of Dryden, however, is ſhewn in this character rather as it exhibited itſelf in curſory converſation, than as it operated on the more important parts of life. His placability and his friendſhip indeed were ſolid virtues; but courteſy and good-humour are often found with little real worth. Since Congreve, who knew him well, has told us no more, the reſt muſt be collected as it can from other teſtimonies, and particularly from thoſe notices which Dryden has very liberally given us of himſelf.

The modeſty which made him ſo ſlow to advance, and ſo eaſy to be repulſed, was certainly no ſuſpicion of deficient merit, or unconſciouſneſs of his own value: he appears to have known, in its whole extent, the dignity of his character, and to have ſet a very high value on his own powers and performances. He probably did not offer his converſation, becauſe he expected it to be ſolicited; and he retired from a cold reception, not ſubmiſſive but indignant, with ſuch reverence of his own greatneſs as made him unwilling to expoſe it to neglect or violation.

His modeſty was by no means inconſiſtent with oſtentatiouſneſs: he is diligent enough to remind the world of his merit, and expreſſes with very little ſcruple his high opinion of his own powers; but his ſelf-commendations are read without ſcorn or indignation; we allow his claims, and love his frankneſs.

Tradition, however, has not allowed that his confidence in himſelf exempted him from jealouſy of others. He is accuſed of envy and inſidiouſneſs; and is particularly charged with inciting Creech to tranſlate Horace, that he might loſe the reputation which Lucretius had given him.

Of this charge we immediately diſcover that it is merely conjectural; the purpoſe was ſuch as no man would confeſs; and a crime that admits no proof, why ſhould we believe?

He has been deſcribed as magiſterially preſiding over the younger writers, and aſſuming the diſtribution of poetical fame; but he who excels has a right to teach, and he whoſe judgement is inconteſtable may without uſurpation examine and decide.

Congreve repreſents him as ready to adviſe and inſtruct; but there is reaſon to believe that his communication was rather uſeful than entertaining. He declares of himſelf that he was ſaturnine, and not one of thoſe whoſe ſpritely ſayings diverted company; and one of his cenſurers makes him ſay,

> Nor wine nor love could ever ſee me gay;
> To writing bred, I knew not what to ſay.

There are men whoſe powers operate only at leiſure and in retirement, and whoſe intellectual vigour deſerts them in converſation; whom merriment confuſes, and objection diſconcerts; whoſe baſhfulneſs reſtrains their exertion, and ſuffers them not to ſpeak till the time of ſpeaking is paſt; or whoſe attention to their own character makes them unwilling to utter at hazard what has not been conſidered, and cannot be recalled.

Of Dryden's ſluggiſhneſs in converſation it is vain to ſearch or to gueſs the cauſe. He certainly wanted neither ſentiments nor language; his intellectual treaſures were great, though they were locked up from his own uſe. *His thoughts*, when he wrote, *flowed in upon him ſo faſt, that his only care which was to chuſe, and which to reject.* Such rapidity of compoſition naturally pro-

miſes a flow of talk, yet we muſt be content to believe what an enemy ſays of him, when he likewiſe ſays it of himſelf. But whatever was his character as a companion, it appears that he lived in familiarity with the higheſt perſons of his time. It is related by Carte of the duke of Ormond, that he uſed often to paſs a night with Dryden, and thoſe with whom Dryden conſorted: who they were, Carte has not told; but certainly the convivial table at which Ormond ſat was not ſurrounded with a plebeian ſociety. He was indeed reproached with boaſting of his familiarity with the great; and Horace will ſupport him in the opinion, that to pleaſe ſuperiours is not the loweſt kind of merit.

The merit of pleaſing muſt, however, be eſtimated by the means. Favour is not always gained by good actions or laudable qualities. Careſſes and preferments are often beſtowed on the auxiliaries of vice, the procurers of pleaſure, or the flatterers of vanity. Dryden has never been charged with any perſonal agency unworthy of a good character: he abetted vice and vanity only with his pen. One of his enemies has accuſed him of lewdneſs in his converſation; but, if accuſation without proof be credited, who ſhall be innocent?

His works afford too many examples of diſſolute licentiouſneſs, and abject adulation; but they were probably, like his merriment, artificial and conſtrained; the effects of ſtudy and meditation, and his trade rather than his pleaſure.

Of the mind that can trade in corruption, and can deliberately pollute itſelf with ideal wickedneſs for the ſake of ſpreading the contagion in ſociety, I wiſh not to conceal or excuſe the depravity.—Such degradation

of

of the dignity of genius, ſuch abuſe of ſuperlative abilities, cannot be contemplated but with grief and indignation. What conſolation can be had, Dryden has afforded, by living to repent, and to teſtify his repentance.

Of dramatick immorality he did not want examples among his predeceſſors, or companions among his contemporaries; but in the meanneſs and ſervility of hyperbolical adulation, I know not whether, ſince the days in which the Roman emperors were deified, he has been ever equalled, except by Afra Behn in an addreſs to Eleanor Gwyn. When once he has undertaken the taſk of praiſe, he no longer retains ſhame in himſelf, nor ſuppoſes it in his patron. As many odoriferous bodies are obſerved to diffuſe perfumes from year to year, without ſenſible diminution of bulk or weight, he appears never to have impoveriſhed his mint of flattery by his expences, however laviſh. He had all the forms of excellence, intellectual and moral, combined in his mind, with endleſs variation; and when he had ſcattered on the hero of the day the golden ſhower of wit and virtue, he had ready for him, whom he wiſhed to court on the morrow, new wit and virtue with another ſtamp. Of this kind of meanneſs he never ſeems to decline the practice, or lament the neceſſity: he conſiders the great as entitled to encomiaſtick homage, and brings praiſe rather as a tribute than a gift, more delighted with the fertility of his invention, than mortified by the proſtitution of his judgement. It is indeed not certain, that on theſe occaſions his judgement much rebelled againſt his intereſt. There are minds which eaſily ſink into ſubmiſſion, that look on grandeur with undiſtinguiſhing reverence,

reverence, and diſcover no defect where there is elevation of rank and affluence of riches.

With his praiſes of others and of himſelf is always intermingled a ſtrain of diſcontent and lamentation, a ſullen growl of reſentment, or a querulous murmur of liſtreſs. His works are under-valued, his merit is unrewarded, and *he has few thanks to pay his ſtars that he was born among Engliſhmen.* To his criticks he is ſometimes contemptuous, ſometimes reſentful, and ſometimes ſubmiſſive. The writer who thinks his works formed for duration, miſtakes his intereſt when he mentions his enemies. He degrades his own dignity by ſhewing that he was affected by their cenſures, and gives laſting importance to names, which, left to themſelves, would vaniſh from remembrance. From this principle Dryden did not oft depart; his complaints are for the greater part general; he ſeldom pollutes his page with an adverſe name. He condeſcended indeed to a controverſy with Settle, in which he perhaps may be conſidered rather as aſſaulting than repelling; and ſince Settle is ſunk into oblivion, his libel remains injurious only to himſelf.

Among anſwers to criticks, no poetical attacks, or altercations, are to be included; they are, like other poems, effuſions of genius, produced as much to obtain praiſe as to obviate cenſure. Theſe Dryden practiſed, and in theſe he excelled.

Of Collier, Blackmore, and Milbourne, he has made mention in the preface to his Fables. To the cenſure of Collier, whoſe remarks may be rather termed admonitions than criticiſms, he makes little reply; being, at the age of ſixty-eight, attentive to better things than the claps of a playhouſe. He complains of Col-

lier's rudeneſs, and the *horſe-play of his raillery*; and aſſerts that *in many places he has perverted by his gloſſes the meaning* of what he cenſures; but in other things he confeſſes that he is juſtly taxed; and ſays, with great calmneſs and candour, *I have pleaded guilty to all thoughts or expreſſions of mine that can be truly accuſed of obſcenity, immorality, or profaneneſs, and retract them. If he be my enemy, let him triumph; if he be my friend, he will be glad of my repentance.* Yet, as our beſt diſpoſitions are imperfect, he left ſtanding in the ſame book a reflection on Collier of great aſperity, and indeed of more aſperity than wit.

Blackmore he repreſents as made his enemy by the poem of *Abſalom and Achitophel*, which *he thinks a little hard upon his fanatick patrons*; and charges him with borrowing the plan of his *Arthur* from the preface to Juvenal, *though he had*, ſays he, *the baſeneſs not to acknowledge his benefactor, but inſtead of it to traduce me as a libel.*

The libel in which Blackmore traduced him was a *Satire upon Wit*; in which, having lamented the exuberance of falſe wit and the deficiency of true, he propoſes that all wit ſhould be re-coined before it is current, and appoints maſters of aſſay who ſhall reject all that is light or debaſed.

'Tis true, that when the coarſe and worthleſs droſs
Is purg'd away, there will be mighty loſs;
Ev'n Congreve, Southern, manly Wycherley,
When thus refin'd, will grievous ſufferers be;
Into the melting-pot when Dryden comes,
What horrid ſtench will riſe, what noiſome fumes!
How will he ſhrink, when all his lewd allay,
And wicked mixture, ſhall be purg'd away!

Thus

Thus ſtands the paſſage in the laſt edition; but in the original there was an abatement of the cenſure, beginning thus:

> But what remains will be ſo pure, 'twill bear
> Th' examination of the moſt ſevere.

Blackmore, finding the cenſure reſented, and the civility diſregarded, ungenerouſly omitted the ſofter part. Such variations diſcover a writer who conſults his paſſions more than his virtue; and it may be reaſonably ſuppoſed that Dryden imputes his enmity to its true cauſe.

Of Milbourne he wrote only in general terms, ſuch as are always ready at the call of anger, whether juſt or not: a ſhort extract will be ſufficient. *He pretends a quarrel to me, that I have fallen foul upon prieſthood; if I have, I am only to aſk pardon of good prieſts, and am afraid his ſhare of the reparation will come to little. Let him be ſatisfied that he ſhall never be able to force himſelf upon me for an adverſary; I contemn him too much to enter into competition with him.*

As for the reſt of thoſe who have written againſt me, they are ſuch ſcoundrels that they deſerve not the leaſt notice to be taken of them. Blackmore and Milbourne are only diſtinguiſhed from the crowd by being remembered to their infamy.

Dryden indeed diſcovered, in many of his writings, an affected and abſurd malignity to prieſts and prieſthood, which naturally raiſed him many enemies, and which was ſometimes as unſeaſonably reſented as it was exerted. Trapp is angry that he calls the ſacrificer in the *Georgicks* the *holy butcher*: the tranſlation is indeed ridiculous; but Trapp's anger ariſes from his zeal, not for the author, but the prieſt; as if any reproach of

the follies of paganiſm could be extended to the preachers of truth.

Dryden's diſlike of the prieſthood is imputed by Langbaine, and I think by Brown, to a repulſe which he ſuffered when he ſolicited ordination; but he denies, in the preface to his Fables, that he ever deſigned to enter into the church; and ſuch a denial he would not have hazarded, if he could have been convicted of falſehood.

Malevolence to the clergy is ſeldom at a great diſtance from irreverence of religion, and Dryden affords no exception to this obſervation. His writings exhibit many paſſages, which, with all the allowance that can be made for characters and occaſions, are ſuch as piety would not have admitted, and ſuch as may vitiate light and unprincipled minds. But there is no reaſon for ſuppoſing that he diſbelieved the religion which he diſobeyed. He forgot his duty rather than diſowned it. His tendency to profaneneſs is the effect of levity, negligence, and looſe converſation, with a deſire of accommodating himſelf to the corruption of the times, by venturing to be wicked as far as he durſt. When he profeſſed himſelf a convert to Popery, he did not pretend to have received any new conviction of the fundamental doctrines of Chriſtianity.

The perſecution of criticks was not the worſt of his vexations; he was much more diſturbed by the importunities of want. His complaints of poverty are ſo frequently repeated, either with the dejection of weakneſs ſinking in helpleſs miſery, or the indignation of merit claiming its tribute from mankind, that it is impoſſible not to deteſt the age which could impoſe on ſuch a man the neceſſity of ſuch ſolicitations, or not to deſpiſe

deſpiſe the man who could ſubmit to ſuch ſolicitations without neceſſity.

Whether by the world's neglect, or his own imprudence, I am afraid that the greateſt part of his life was paſſed in exigences. Such outcries were ſurely never uttered but in ſevere pain. Of his ſupplies or his expences no probable eſtimate can now be made. Except the ſalary of the Laureat, to which king James added the office of Hiſtoriographer, perhaps with ſome additional emoluments, his whole revenue ſeems to have been caſual; and it is well known that he ſeldom lives frugally who lives by chance. Hope is always liberal, and they that truſt her promiſes make little ſcruple of revelling to-day on the profits of the morrow.

Of his plays the profit was not great, and of the produce of his other works very little intelligence can be had. By diſcourſing with the late amiable Mr. Tonſon, I could not find that any memorials of the tranſactions between his predeceſſor and Dryden had been preſerved, except the following papers:

"I do hereby promiſe to pay John Dryden, Eſq; "or order, on the 25th of March 1699; the ſum of "two hundred and fifty guineas, in conſideration of "ten thouſand verſes, which the ſaid John Dryden, "Eſq; is to deliver to me Jacob Tonſon, when finiſh-"ed, whereof ſeven thouſand five hundred verſes, "more or leſs, are already in the ſaid Jacob Tonſon's "poſſeſſion. And I do hereby farther promiſe, and "engage myſelf, to make up the ſaid ſum of two hun-"dred and fifty guineas three hundred pounds ſterling "to the ſaid John Dryden, Eſq; his executors, ad-"miniſtrators, or aſſigns, at the beginning of the ſe-"cond impreſſion of the ſaid ten thouſand verſes.

" In witneſs whereof I have hereunto ſet my hand
" and ſeal, this 20th day of March, 169$\frac{8}{9}$.

" Jacob Tonſon,

" Sealed and delivered, being firſt
" duly ſtampt, purſuant to the acts
" of parliament for that purpoſe,
" in the preſence of
" Ben. Portlock.
" Will. Congreve."

" March 24th, 1698,

" Received then of Mr. Jacob Tonſon the ſum of
" two hundred ſixty-eight pounds fifteen ſhillings, in
" purſuance of an agreement for ten thouſand verſes,
" to be delivered by me to the ſaid Jacob Tonſon,
" whereof I have already delivered to him about ſeven
" thouſand five hundred, more or leſs; he the ſaid
" Jacob Tonſon being obliged to make up the foreſaid
" ſum of two hundred ſixty-eight pounds fifteen ſhil-
" lings three hundred pounds, at the beginning of the
" ſecond impreſſion of the foreſaid ten thouſand verſes;

" I ſay, received by me

" John Dryden.

" Witneſs Charles Dryden."

Two hundred and fifty guineas, at 1*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.* is 268*l.* 15*s.*

It is manifeſt from the dates of this contract, that it relates to the volume of Fables, which contains about twelve thouſand verſes, and for which therefore the payment muſt have been afterwards enlarged.

I have been told of another letter yet remaining, in which he deſires Tonſon to bring him money, to pay for a watch which he had ordered for his ſon, and which the maker would not leave without the price.

The

The inevitable conſequence of poverty is dependence. Dryden had probably no recourſe in his exigencies but to his bookſeller. The particular character of Tonſon I do not know; but the general conduct of traders was much leſs liberal in thoſe times than in our own; their views were narrower, and their manners groſſer. To the mercantile ruggedneſs of that race, the delicacy of the poet was ſometimes expoſed. Lord Bolingbroke, who in his youth had cultivated poetry, related to Dr. King of Oxford, that one day, when he viſited Dryden, they heard, as they were converſing, another perſon entering the houſe. "This," ſaid Dryden, "is Tonſon. You will take care not to "depart before he goes away; for I have not com-"pleted the ſheet which I promiſed him; and if you "leave me unprotected, I muſt ſuffer all the rudeneſs "to which his reſentment can prompt his tongue."

What rewards he obtained for his poems, beſides the payment of the bookſeller, cannot be known: Mr. Derrick, who conſulted ſome of his relations, was informed that his Fables obtained five hundred pounds from the dutcheſs of Ormond; a preſent not unſuitable to the magnificence of that ſplendid family; and he quotes Moyle, as relating that forty pounds were paid by a muſical ſociety for the uſe of *Alexander's Feaſt*.

In thoſe days the œconomy of government was yet unſettled, and the payments of the Exchequer were dilatory and uncertain: of this diſorder there is reaſon to believe that the Laureat ſometimes felt the effects; for in one of his prefaces he complains of thoſe, who, being intruſted with the diſtribution of the Prince's bounty, ſuffer thoſe that depend upon it to languiſh in penury.

Of his petty habits or ſlight amuſements, tradition has retained little. Of the only two men whom I have found to whom he was perſonally known, one told me that at the houſe which he frequented, called Will's Coffee-houſe, the appeal upon any literary diſpute was made to him; and the other related, that his armed chair, which in the winter had a ſettled and preſcriptive place by the fire, was in the ſummer placed in the balcony, and that he called the two places his winter and his ſummer ſeat. This is all the intelligence which his two ſurvivors afforded me.

One of his opinions will do him no honour in the preſent age, though in his own time, at leaſt in the beginning of it, he was far from having it confined to himſelf. He put great confidence in the prognoſtications of judicial aſtrology. In the Appendix to the Life of Congreve is a narrative of ſome of his predictions wonderfully fulfilled; but I know not the writer's means of information, or character of veracity. That he had the configurations of the horoſcope in his mind, and conſidered them as influencing the affairs of men, he does not forbear to hint.

> The utmoſt malice of the ſtars is paſt.——
> Now frequent *trines* the happier lights among,
> And *high-rais'd Mars*, from his dark priſon freed,
> Thoſe weights took off that on his planet hung,
> Will glorioufly the new-laid works ſucceed.

He has elſewhere ſhewn his attention to the planetary powers; and in the preface to his Fables has endeavoured obliquely to juſtify his ſuperſtition, by attributing the ſame to ſome of the Ancients. The latter, added to this narrative, leaves no doubt of his notions or practice.

So

So ſlight and ſo ſcanty is the knowledge which I have been able to collect concerning the private life and domeſtick manners of a man, whom every Engliſh generation muſt mention with reverence as a critick and a poet.

DRYDEN may be properly conſidered as the father of Engliſh criticiſm, as the writer who firſt taught us to determine upon principles the merit of compoſition. Of our former poets, the greateſt dramatiſt wrote without rules, conducted through life and nature by a genius that rarely miſled, and rarely deſerted him. Of the reſt, thoſe who knew the laws of propriety had neglected to teach them.

Two *Arts of Engliſh Poetry* were written in the days of Elizabeth by Webb and Puttenham, from which ſomething might be learned, and a few hints had been given by Jonſon and Cowley; but Dryden's *Eſſay on Dramatick Poetry* was the firſt regular and valuable treatiſe on the art of writing.

He who, having formed his opinions in the preſent age of Engliſh literature, turns back to peruſe this dialogue, will not perhaps find much increaſe of knowledge, or much novelty of inſtruction; but he is to remember that critical principles were then in the hands of a few, who had gathered them partly from the Ancients, and partly from the Italians and French. The ſtructure of dramatick poems was not then generally underſtood. Audiences applauded by inſtinct, and poets perhaps often pleaſed by chance.

A writer who obtains his full purpoſe loſes himſelf in his own luſtre. Of an opinion which is no longer diſputed, the evidence ceaſes to be examined. Of an

art

art univerſally practiſed, the firſt teacher is forgotten. Learning once made popular is no longer learning; it has the appearance of ſomething which we have beſtowed upon ourſelves, as the dew appears to riſe from the field which it refreſhes.

To judge rightly of an author, we muſt tranſport ourſelves to his time, and examine what were the wants of his contemporaries, and what were his means of ſupplying them. That which is eaſy at one time was difficult at another. Dryden at leaſt imported his ſcience, and gave his country what it wanted before; or rather, he imported only the materials, and manufactured them by his own ſkill.

The dialogue on the Drama was one of his firſt eſſays of criticiſm, written when he was yet a timorous candidate for reputation, and therefore laboured with that diligence which he might allow himſelf ſomewhat to remit, when his name gave ſanction to his poſitions, and his awe of the public was abated, partly by cuſtom, and partly by ſucceſs. It will not be eaſy to find, in all the opulence of our language, a treatiſe ſo artfully variegated with ſucceſſive repreſentations of oppoſite probabilities, ſo enlivened with imagery, ſo brightened with illuſtrations. His portraits of the Engliſh dramatiſts are wrought with great ſpirit and diligence. The account of Shakſpeare may ſtand as a perpetual model of encomiaſtick criticiſm; exact without minuteneſs, and lofty without exaggeration. The praiſe laviſhed by Longinus, on the atteſtation of the heroes of Marathon, by Demoſthenes, fades away before it. In a few lines is exhibited a character, ſo extenſive in its comprehenſion, and ſo curious in its limitations, that nothing can be added, diminiſhed, or

reformed;

reformed; nor can the editors and admirers of Shakſpeare, in all their emulation of reverence, boaſt of much more than of having diffuſed and paraphraſed this epitome of excellence, of having changed Dryden's gold for baſer metal, of lower value though of greater bulk.

In this, and in all his other eſſays on the ſame ſubject, the criticiſm of Dryden is the criticiſm of a poet; not a dull collection of theorems, nor a rude detection of faults, which perhaps the cenſor was not able to have committed; but a gay and vigorous diſſertation, where delight is mingled with inſtruction, and where the author proves his right of judgement, by his power of performance.

The different manner and effect with which critical knowledge may be conveyed, was perhaps never more clearly exemplified than in the performances of Rymer and Dryden. It was ſaid of a diſpute between two mathematicians, "malim cum Scaligero errare, quam "cum Clavio recte ſapere;" that *it was more eligible to go wrong with one than right with the other.* A tendency of the ſame kind every mind muſt feel at the peruſal of Dryden's prefaces and Rymer's diſcourſes. With Dryden, we are wandering in queſt of Truth; whom we find, if we find her at all, dreſt in the graces of elegance; and if we miſs her, the labour of the purſuit rewards itſelf; we are led only through fragrance and flowers: Rymer, without taking a nearer, takes a rougher way; every ſtep is to be made through thorns and brambles; and Truth, if we meet her, appears repulſive by her mien, and ungraceful by her habit. Dryden's criticiſm has the majeſty of a queen; Rymer's has the ferocity of a tyrant.

As

As he had ſtudied with great diligence the art of poetry, and enlarged or rectified his notions, by experience perpetually increaſing, he had his mind ſtored with principles and obſervations; he poured out his knowledge with little labour; for of labour, notwithſtanding the multiplicity of his productions, there is ſufficient reaſon to ſuſpect that he was not a lover. To write *con amore*, with fondneſs for the employment, with perpetual touches and retouches, with unwillingneſs to take leave of his own idea, and an unwearied purſuit of unattainable perfection, was, I think, no part of his character.

His criticiſm may be conſidered as general or occaſional. In his general precepts, which depend upon the nature of things, and the ſtructure of the human mind, he may doubtleſs be ſafely recommended to the confidence of the reader; but his occaſional and particular poſitions were ſometimes intereſted, ſometimes negligent, and ſometimes capricious. It is not without reaſon that Trapp, ſpeaking of the praiſes which he beſtows on Palamon and Arcite, ſays, "Novimus "judicium Drydeni de poemate quodam *Chaucceri*, "pulchro ſane illo, et admodum laudando, nimirum "quod non modo vere epicum ſit, ſed Iliada etiam "atque Æneada æquet, imo ſuperet. Sed novimus "eodem tempore viri illius maximi non ſemper ac- "curatiſſimas eſſe cenſuras, nec ad ſeveriſſimam critices "normam exactas: illo judice id plerumque optimum "eſt, quod nunc præ manibus habet, & in quo nunc "occupatur."

He is therefore by no means conſtant to himſelf. His defence and deſertion of dramatick rhyme is generally known. *Spence*, in his remarks on Pope's Odyſſey, produces

produces what he thinks an unconquerable quotation from Dryden's preface to the Eneid, in favour of tranſlating an epic poem into blank verſe; but he forgets that when his author attempted the Iliad, ſome years afterwards, he departed from his own deciſion, and tranſlated into rhyme.

When he has any objection to obviate, or any licenſe to defend, he is not very ſcrupulous about what he aſſerts, nor very cautious, if the preſent purpoſe be ſerved, not to entangle himſelf in his own ſophiſtries. But when all arts are exhauſted, like other hunted animals, he ſometimes ſtands at bay; when he cannot diſown the groſſneſs of one of his plays, he declares that he knows not any law that preſcribes morality to a comick poet.

His remarks on ancient or modern writers are not always to be truſted. His parallel of the verſification of Ovid with that of Claudian has been very juſtly cenſured by *Sewel* *. His compariſon of the firſt line of Virgil with the firſt of Statius is not happier. Virgil, he ſays, is ſoft and gentle, and would have thought Statius mad, if he had heard him thundering out

Quæ ſuperimpoſito moles geminata coloſſo.

Statius perhaps heats himſelf, as he proceeds, to exaggerations ſomewhat hyperbolical; but undoubtedly Virgil would have been too haſty, if he had condemned him to ſtraw for one ſounding line. Dryden wanted an inſtance, and the firſt that occurred was impreſt into the ſervice.

What he wiſhes to ſay, he ſays at hazard; he cited *Gorbuduc*, which he had never ſeen; gives a falſe

* Preface to Ovid's Metamorphoſes. Orig. Edit.

account

account of *Chapman's* verſification; and diſcovers, in the preface to his Fables, that he tranſlated the firſt book of the Iliad, without knowing what was in the ſecond.

It will be difficult to prove that Dryden ever made any great advances in literature. As having diſtinguiſhed himſelf at Weſtminſter under the tuition of Buſby, who advanced his ſcholars to a height of knowledge very rarely attained in grammar-ſchools, he reſided afterwards at Cambridge, it is not to be ſuppoſed, that his ſkill in the ancient languages was deficient, compared with that of common ſtudents; but his ſcholaſtick acquiſitions ſeem not proportionate to his opportunities and abilities. He could not, like Milton or Cowley, have made his name illuſtrious merely by his learning. He mentions but few books, and thoſe ſuch as lie in the beaten track of regular ſtudy; from which if ever he departs, he is in danger of loſing himſelf in unknown regions.

In his Dialogue on the Drama, he pronounces with great confidence that the Latin tragedy of Medea is not Ovid's, becauſe it is not ſufficiently intereſting and pathetick. He might have determined the queſtion upon ſurer evidence; for it is quoted by Quintilian as the work of Seneca; and the only line which remains of Ovid's play, for one line is left us, is not there to be found. There was therefore no need of the gravity of conjecture, or the diſcuſſion of plot or ſentiment, to find what was already known upon higher authority than ſuch diſcuſſions can ever reach.

His literature, though not always free from oſtentation, will be commonly found either obvious, and made his own by the art of dreſſing it; or ſuperficial,

which,

which, by what he gives, ſhews what he wanted; or erroneous, haſtily collected, and negligently ſcattered.

Yet it cannot be ſaid that his genius is ever unprovided of matter, or that his fancy languiſhes in penury of ideas. His works abound with knowledge, and ſparkle with illuſtrations. There is ſcarcely any ſcience or faculty that does not ſupply him with occaſional images and lucky ſimilitudes; every page diſcovers a mind very widely acquainted both with art and nature, and in full poſſeſſion of great ſtores of intellectual wealth. Of him that knows much, it is natural to ſuppoſe that he has read with diligence; yet I rather believe that the knowledge of Dryden was gleaned from accidental intelligence and various converſation, by a quick apprehenſion, a judicious ſelection, and a happy memory, a keen appetite of knowledge, and a powerful digeſtion; by vigilance that permitted nothing to paſs without notice, and a habit of reflection that ſuffered nothing uſeful to be loſt. A mind like Dryden's, always curious, always active, to which every underſtanding was proud to be aſſociated, and of which every one ſolicited the regard, by an ambitious diſplay of himſelf, had a more pleaſant, perhaps a nearer way to knowledge than by the ſilent progreſs of ſolitary reading. I do not ſuppoſe that he deſpiſed books, or intentionally neglected them; but that he was carried out, by the impetuoſity of his genius, to more vivid and ſpeedy inſtructors; and that his ſtudies were rather deſultory and fortuitous than conſtant and ſyſtematical.

It muſt be confeſſed that he ſcarcely ever appears to want book-learning but when he mentions books; and

and to him may be transferred the praiſe which he gives his maſter Charles:

His converſation, wit, and parts,
His knowledge in the nobleſt uſeful arts,
Were ſuch, dead authors could not give,
But habitudes of thoſe that live;
Who lighting him, did greater lights receive;
He drain'd from all, and all they knew,
His apprehenſions quick, his judgement true:
That the moſt learn'd with ſhame confeſs
His knowledge more, his reading only leſs.

Of all this, however, if the proof be demanded, I will not undertake to give it; the atoms of probability of which my opinion has been formed, lie ſcattered over all his works; and by him who thinks the queſtion worth his notice, his works muſt be peruſed with very cloſe attention.

Criticiſm, either didactick or defenſive, occupies almoſt all his proſe, except thoſe pages which he has devoted to his patrons; but none of his prefaces were ever thought tedious. They have not the formality of a ſettled ſtyle, in which the firſt half of the ſentence betrays the other. The clauſes are never balanced, nor the periods modelled; every word ſeems to drop by chance, though it falls into its proper place. Nothing is cold or languid; the whole is airy, animated, and vigorous; what is little, is gay; what is great, is ſplendid. He may be thought to mention himſelf too frequently; but while he forces himſelf upon our eſteem, we cannot refuſe him to ſtand high in his own. Every thing is excuſed by the play of images and the ſpritelineſs of expreſſion. Though all is eaſy, nothing is feeble; though all ſeems careleſs, there is nothing harſh; and though, ſince his earlier works, more than

a century

a century has paſſed, they have nothing yet uncouth or obſolete.

He who writes much, will not eaſily eſcape a manner, ſuch a recurrence of particular modes as may be eaſily noted. Dryden is always *another and the ſame*, he does not exhibit a ſecond time the ſame elegances in the ſame form, nor appears to have any art other than that of expreſſing with clearneſs what he thinks with vigour. His ſtyle could not eaſily be imitated, either ſeriouſly or ludicrouſly; for, being always equable and always varied, it has no prominent or diſcriminative characters. The beauty who is totally free from diſproportion of parts and features, cannot be ridiculed by an overcharged reſemblance.

From his proſe, however, Dryden derives only his accidental and ſecondary praiſe; the veneration with which his name is pronounced by every cultivator of Engliſh literature, is paid to him as he refined the language, improved the ſentiments, and tuned the numbers of Engliſh Poetry.

After about half a century of forced thoughts, and rugged metre, ſome advances towards nature and harmony had been already made by Waller and Denham; they had ſhewn that long diſcourſes in rhyme grew more pleaſing when they were broken into couplets, and that verſe conſiſted not only in the number but the arrangement of ſyllables.

But though they did much, who can deny that they left much to do? Their works were not many, nor were their minds of very ample comprehenſion. More examples of more modes of compoſition were neceſſary for the eſtabliſhment of regularity and the introduction of propriety in word and thought.

Every language of a learned nation neceſſarily divides itſelf into diction ſcholaſtick and popular, grave and familiar, elegant and groſs; and from a nice diſtinction of theſe different parts, ariſes a great part of the beauty of ſtyle. But if we except a few minds, the favourites of nature, to whom their own original rectitude was in the place of rules, this delicacy of ſelection was little known to our authors; our ſpeech lay before them in a heap of confuſion, and every man took for every purpoſe what chance might offer him.

There was therefore before the time of Dryden no poetical diction, no ſyſtem of words at once refined from the groſſneſs of domeſtick uſe, and free from the harſhneſs of terms appropriated to particular arts. Words too familiar, or too remote, defeat the purpoſe of a poet. From thoſe ſounds which we hear on ſmall or on coarſe occaſions, we do not eaſily receive ſtrong impreſſions, or delightful images; and words to which we are nearly ſtrangers, whenever they occur, draw that attention on themſelves which they ſhould tranſmit to things.

Thoſe happy combinations of words which diſtinguiſh poetry from proſe, had been rarely attempted; we had few elegances or flowers of ſpeech, the roſes had not yet been plucked from the bramble, or different colours had not been joined to enliven one another.

It may be doubted whether Waller and Denham could have over-born the prejudices which had long prevailed, and which even then were ſheltered by the protection of Cowley. The new verification, as it was called, may be conſidered as owing its eſtabliſhment to Dryden; from whoſe time it is apparent that Engliſh

poetry

poetry has had no tendency to relapſe to its former ſavageneſs.

The affluence and comprehenſion of our language is very illuſtriouſly diſplayed in our poetical tranſlations of Ancient Writers; a work which the French ſeem to relinquiſh in deſpair, and which we were long unable to perform with dexterity. Ben Jonſon thought it neceſſary to copy Horace almoſt word by word; Feltham, his contemporary and adverſary, conſiders it as indiſpenſably requiſite in a tranſlation to give line for line. It is ſaid that Sandys, whom Dryden calls the beſt verſifier of the laſt age, has ſtruggled hard to compriſe every book of his Engliſh Metamorphoſes in the ſame number of verſes with the original. Holyday had nothing in view but to ſhew that he underſtood his author, with ſo little regard to the grandeur of his diction, or the volubility of his numbers, that his metres can hardly be called verſes; they cannot be read without reluctance, nor will the labour always be rewarded by underſtanding them. Cowley ſaw that ſuch *copyers* were a *ſervile race*; he aſſerted his liberty, and ſpread his wings ſo boldly that he left his authors. It was reſerved for Dryden to fix the limits of poetical liberty, and give us juſt rules and examples of tranſlation.

When languages are formed upon different principles, it is impoſſible that the ſame modes of expreſſion ſhould always be elegant in both. While they run on together, the cloſeſt tranſlation may be conſidered as the beſt; but when they divaricate, each muſt take its natural courſe. Where correſpondence cannot be obtained, it is neceſſary to be content with ſomething equivalent. *Tranſlation therefore*, ſays Dry-

den, *is not ſo looſe as paraphraſe, nor ſo cloſe as metaphraſe.*

All poliſhed languages have different ſtyles; the conciſe, the diffuſe, the lofty, and the humble. In the proper choice of ſtyle conſiſts the reſemblance which Dryden principally exacts from the tranſlator. He is to exhibit his author's thoughts in ſuch a dreſs of diction as the author would have given them, had his language been Engliſh: rugged magnificence is not to be ſoftened; hyperbolical oſtentation is not to be repreſſed; nor ſententious affectation to have its points blunted. A tranſlator is to be like his author: it is not his buſineſs to excell him.

The reaſonableneſs of theſe rules ſeems ſufficient for their vindication; and the effects produced by obſerving them were ſo happy, that I know not whether they were ever oppoſed but by Sir Edward Sherburne, a man whoſe learning was greater than his powers of poetry; and who, being better qualified to give the meaning than the ſpirit of Seneca, has introduced his verſion of three tragedies by a defence of cloſe tranſlation. The authority of Horace, which the new tranſlators cited in defence of their practice, he has, by a judicious explanation, taken fairly from them; but reaſon wants not Horace to ſupport it.

It ſeldom happens that all the neceſſary cauſes concur to any great effect: will is wanting to power, or power to will, or both are impeded by external obſtructions. The exigences in which Dryden was condemned to paſs his life, are reaſonably ſuppoſed to have blaſted his genius, to have driven out his works in a ſtate of immaturity, and to have intercepted the full-blown elegance which longer growth would have ſupplied.

Poverty,

Poverty, like other rigid powers, is ſometimes too haſtily accuſed. If the excellence of Dryden's works was leſſened by his indigence, their number was increaſed; and I know not how it will be proved, that if he had written leſs he would have written better; or that indeed he would have undergone the toil of an author, if he had not been ſolicited by ſomething more preſſing than the love of praiſe.

But as is ſaid by his Sebaſtian,

What had been, is unknown; what is, appears.

We know that Dryden's ſeveral productions were ſo many ſucceſſive expedients for his ſupport; his plays were therefore often borrowed, and his poems were almoſt all occaſional.

In an occaſional performance no height of excellence can be expected from any mind, however fertile in itſelf, and however ſtored with acquiſitions. He whoſe work is general and arbitrary, has the choice of his matter, and takes that which his inclination and his ſtudies have beſt qualified him to diſplay and decorate. He is at liberty to delay his publication, till he has ſatisfied his friends and himſelf; till he has reformed his firſt thoughts by ſubſequent examination; and poliſhed away thoſe faults which the precipitance of ardent compoſition is likely to leave behind it. Virgil is related to have poured out a great number of lines in the morning, and to have paſſed the day in reducing them to fewer.

The occaſional poet is circumſcribed by the narrowneſs of his ſubject. Whatever can happen to man has happened ſo often that little remains for fancy or invention. We have been all born; we have moſt of us been married; and ſo many have died before us,

that our deaths can ſupply but few materials for a poet. In the fate of princes the publick has an intereſt; and what happens to them of good or evil, the poets have always conſidered as buſineſs for the Muſe. But after ſo many inauguratory gratulations, nuptial hymns, and funeral dirges, he muſt be highly favoured by nature, or by fortune, who ſays any thing not ſaid before. Even war and conqueſt, however ſplendid, ſuggeſt no new images; the triumphal chariot of a victorious monarch can be decked only with thoſe ornaments that have graced his predeceſſors.

Not only matter but time is wanting. The poem muſt not be delayed till the occaſion is forgotten. The lucky moments of animated imagination cannot be attended; elegances and illuſtrations cannot be multiplied by gradual accumulation; the compoſition muſt be diſpatched while converſation is yet buſy, and admiration freſh; and haſte is to be made, leſt ſome other event ſhould lay hold upon mankind.

Occaſional compoſitions may however ſecure to a writer the praiſe both of learning and facility; for they cannot be the effect of long ſtudy, and muſt be furniſhed immediately from the treaſures of the mind.

The death of Cromwell was the firſt publick event which called forth Dryden's poetical powers. His heroick ſtanzas have beauties and defects; the thoughts are vigorous, and though not always proper, ſhew a mind replete with ideas; the numbers are ſmooth, and the diction, if not altogether correct, is elegant and eaſy.

Davenant was perhaps at this time his favourite author, though Gondibert never appears to have been

been popular; and from Davenant he learned to pleaſe his ear with the ſtanza of four lines alternately rhymed.

Dryden very early formed his verſification: there are in this early production no traces of Donne's or Jonſon's ruggedneſs; but he did not ſo ſoon free his mind from the ambition of forced conceits. In his verſes on the Reſtoration, he ſays of the King's exile,

> He, toſs'd by Fate—
> Could taſte no ſweets of youth's deſired age,
> But found his life too true a pilgrimage.

And afterwards, to ſhew how virtue and wiſdom are increaſed by adverſity, he makes this remark:

> Well might the ancient poets then confer
> On Night the honour'd name of *counſellor*,
> Since, ſtruck with rays of proſperous fortune blind,
> We light alone in dark afflictions find.

His praiſe of Monk's dexterity compriſes ſuch a cluſter of thoughts unallied to one another, as will not elſewhere be eaſily found:

> 'Twas Monk, whom providence deſign'd to looſe
> Thoſe real bonds falſe freedom did impoſe.
> The bleſſed ſaints that watch'd this turning ſcene,
> Did from their ſtars with joyful wonder lean,
> To ſee ſmall clues draw vaſteſt weights along,
> Not in their bulk, but in their order ſtrong.
> Thus pencils can by one ſlight touch reſtore
> Smiles to that changed face that wept before.
> With eaſe ſuch fond chimæras we purſue,
> As fancy frames for fancy to ſubdue:
> But, when ourſelves to action we betake,
> It ſhuns the mint like gold that chymiſts make:

How

How hard was then his taſk, at once to be
What in the body natural we ſee!
Man's Architect diſtinctly did ordain
The charge of muſcles, nerves, and of the brain,
Through viewleſs conduits ſpirits to diſpenſe
The ſprings of motion from the ſeat of ſenſe.
'Twas not the haſty product of a day,
But the well-ripen'd fruit of wiſe delay.
He, like a patient angler, ere he ſtrook,
Would let them play a-while upon the hook.
Our healthful food the ſtomach labours thus,
At firſt embracing what it ſtrait doth cruſh.
Wiſe leaches will not vain receipts obtrude,
While growing pains pronounce the humours crude;
Deaf to complaints, they wait upon the ill,
Till ſome ſafe criſis authorize their ſkill.

He had not yet learned, indeed he never learned well, to forbear the improper uſe of mythology. After having rewarded the heathen deities for their care,

With *Algæ* who the ſacred altar ſtrows?
To all the ſea-gods Charles an offering owes;
A bull to thee, Portunus, ſhall be ſlain;
A ram to you, ye Tempeſts of the Main.

He tells us, in the language of religion,

Prayer ſtorm'd the ſkies, and ravith'd Charles from thence,
As heaven itſelf is took by violence.

And afterwards mentions one of the moſt awful paſſages of Sacred Hiſtory.

Other conceits there are, too curious to be quite omitted; as,

For by example moſt we ſinn'd before,
And, glaſs-like, clearneſs mix'd with frailty bore.

How

How far he was yet from thinking it neceſſary to found his ſentiments on Nature, appears from the extravagance of his fictions and hyperboles.

> The winds, that never moderation knew,
> Afraid to blow too much, too faintly blew;
> Or, out of breath with joy, could not enlarge
> Their ſtraiten'd lungs.—
> It is no longer motion cheats your view;
> As you meet it, the land approacheth you;
> The land returns, and in the white it wears
> The marks of penitence and ſorrow bears.

I know not whether this fancy, however little be its value, was not borrowed. A French poet read to Malherbe ſome verſes in which he repreſents France as moving out of its place to receive the king. "Though "this," ſaid Malherbe, "was in my time, I do not "remember it."

His poem on the *Coronation* has a more even tenour of thought. Some lines deſerve to be quoted:

> You have already quench'd ſedition's brand,
> And zeal, that burnt it, only warms the land;
> The jealous ſects that durſt not truſt their cauſe
> So far from their own will as to the laws,
> Him for their umpire, and their ſynod take,
> And their appeal alone to Cæſar make.

Here may be found one particle of that old verſification, of which, I believe, in all his works, there is not another:

> Nor is it duty, or our hope alone,
> Creates that joy, but full *fruition*.

In the verſes to the lord chancellor Clarendon, two years afterwards, is a conceit ſo hopeleſs at the firſt

view, that few would have attempted it; and ſo ſucceſsfully laboured, that though at laſt it gives the reader more perplexity than pleaſure, and ſeems hardly worth the ſtudy that it coſts, yet it muſt be valued as a proof of a mind at once ſubtle and comprehenſive:

In open proſpect nothing bounds our eye,
Until the earth ſeems join'd unto the ſky:
So in this hemiſphere our utmoſt view
Is only bounded by our king and you:
Our ſight is limited where you are join'd,
And beyond that no farther heaven can find.
So well your virtues do with his agree,
That, though your orbs of different greatneſs be,
Yet both are for each other's uſe diſpos'd,
His to encloſe, and yours to be enclos'd.
Nor could another in your room have been,
Except an emptineſs had come between.

The compariſon of the Chancellor to the Indies leaves all reſemblance too far behind it:

And as the Indies were not found before
Thoſe rich perfumes which from the happy ſhore
The winds upon their balmy wings convey'd,
Whoſe guilty ſweetneſs firſt their world betray'd;
So by your counſels we are brought to view
A new and undiſcover'd world in you.

There is another compariſon, for there is little elſe in the poem, of which, though perhaps it cannot be explained into plain proſaick meaning, the mind perceives enough to be delighted, and readily forgives its obſcurity, for its magnificence:

How ſtrangely active are the arts of peace,
Whoſe reſtleſs motions leſs than wars do ceaſe:
Peace is not freed from labour, but from noiſe;
And war more force, but not more pains employs:

Such

Such is the mighty ſwiftneſs of your mind,
That, like the earth's, it leaves our ſenſe behind,
While you ſo ſmoothly turn and rowl our ſphere,
That rapid motion does but reſt appear.
For as in nature's ſwiftneſs, with the throng
Of flying orbs while ours is borne along,
All ſeems at reſt to the deluded eye,
Mov'd by the ſoul of the ſame harmony:
So carry'd on by your unwearied care,
We reſt in peace, and yet in motion ſhare.

To this ſucceed four lines, which perhaps afford Dryden's firſt attempt at thoſe penetrating remarks on human nature, for which he ſeems to have been peculiarly formed:

Let envy then thoſe crimes within you ſee,
From which the happy never muſt be free;
Envy that does with miſery reſide,
The joy and the revenge of ruin'd pride.

Into this poem he ſeems to have collected all his powers; and after this he did not often bring upon his anvil ſuch ſtubborn and unmalleable thoughts; but, as a ſpecimen of his abilities to unite the moſt unſociable matter, he has concluded with lines, of which I think not myſelf obliged to tell the meaning:

Yet unimpair'd with labours, or with time,
Your age but ſeems to a new youth to climb.
Thus heavenly bodies do our time beget,
And meaſure change, but ſhare no part of it:
And ſtill it ſhall without a weight increaſe,
Like this new year, whoſe motions never ceaſe.
For ſince the glorious courſe you have begun
Is led by Charles, as that is by the ſun,
It muſt both weightleſs and immortal prove,
Becauſe the centre of it is above.

In

In the *Annus Mirabilis* he returned to the quatrain, which from that time he totally quitted, perhaps from this experience of its inconvenience, for he complains of its difficulty. This is one of his greateſt attempts. He had ſubjects equal to his abilities, a great naval war, and the Fire of London. Battles have always been deſcribed in heroick poetry; but a ſea-fight and artillery had yet ſomething of novelty. New arts are long in the world before poets deſcribe them; for they borrow every thing from their predeceſſors, and commonly derive very little from nature or from life. Boileau was the firſt French writer that had ever hazarded in verſe the mention of modern war, or the effects of gunpowder. We, who are leſs afraid of novelty, had already poſſeſſion of thoſe dreadful images: Waller had deſcribed a ſea-fight. Milton had not yet transferred the invention of fire-arms to the rebellious angels.

This poem is written with great diligence, yet does not fully anſwer the expectation raiſed by ſuch ſubject and ſuch a writer. With the ſtanza of Davenant he has ſometimes his vein of parentheſis, and incidental diſquiſition, and ſtops his narrative for a wiſe remark.

The general fault is, that he affords more ſentiment than deſcription, and does not ſo much impreſs ſcenes upon the fancy, as deduce conſequences and make compariſons.

The initial ſtanzas have rather too much reſemblance to the firſt lines of Waller's poem on the war with Spain; perhaps ſuch a beginning is natural, and could not be avoided without affectation. Both Waller and Dryden might take their hint from the poem on the civil war of Rome, *Orbem jam totum*, &c.

Of the King collecting his navy, he ſays,

It ſeems as every ſhip their ſovereign knows,
His awful ſummons they ſo ſoon obey;
So hear the ſcaly herds when Proteus blows,
And ſo to paſture follow through the ſea.

It would not be hard to believe that Dryden had written the two firſt lines ſeriouſly, and that ſome wag had added the two latter in burleſque. Who would expect the lines that immediately follow, which are indeed perhaps indecently hyperbolical, but certainly in a mode totally different?

To ſee this fleet upon the ocean move,
Angels drew wide the curtains of the ſkies;
And heaven, as if there wanted lights above,
For tapers made two glaring comets riſe.

The deſcription of the attempt at Bergen will afford a very compleat ſpecimen of the deſcriptions in this poem:

And now approach'd their fleet from India, fraught
With all the riches of the riſing ſun:
And precious ſand from ſouthern climates brought,
The fatal regions where the war begun.

Like hunted caſtors, conſcious of their ſtore,
Their way-laid wealth to Norway's coaſt they bring:
Then firſt the North's cold boſom ſpices bore,
And winter brooded on the eaſtern ſpring.

By the rich ſcent we found our perfum'd prey,
Which, flank'd with rocks, did cloſe in covert lie;
And round about their murdering cannon lay,
At once to threaten and invite the eye.

Fiercer than cannon, and than rocks more hard,
The Engliſh undertake th' unequal war:
Seven ſhips alone, by which the port is barr'd,
Beſiege the Indies, and all Denmark dare.

Theſe fight like huſbands, but like lovers thoſe:
Theſe fain would keep, and thoſe more fain enjoy:
And to ſuch height their frantic paſſion grows,
That what both love, both hazard to deſtroy:

Amidſt whole heaps of ſpices lights a ball,
And now their odours arm'd againſt them fly:
Some preciouſly by ſhatter'd porcelain fall,
And ſome by aromatic ſplinters die,

And though by tempeſts of the prize bereft,
In heaven's inclemency ſome eaſe we find:
Our foes we vanquiſh'd by our valour left,
And only yielded to the ſeas and wind.

In this manner is the ſublime too often mingled with the ridiculous. The Dutch ſeek a ſhelter for a wealthy fleet: this ſurely needed no illuſtration; yet they muſt fly, not like all the reſt of mankind on the ſame occaſion, but *like hunted caſtors*; and they might with ſtrict propriety be hunted; for we winded them by our noſes—their *perfumes* betrayed them. The *Huſband* and the *Lover*, though of more dignity than the Caſtor, are images too domeſtick to mingle properly with the horrors of war. The two quatrains that follow are worthy of the author.

The account of the different ſenſations with which the two fleets retired, when the night parted them, is one of the faireſt flowers of Engliſh poetry.

The night comes on, we eager to purſue
The combat ſtill, and they aſham'd to leave:
'Till the laſt ſtreaks of dying day withdrew,
And doubtful moon-light did our rage deceive.

In th' Engliſh fleet each ſhip reſounds with joy,
And loud applauſe of their great leader's fame:
In fi'ry dreams the Dutch they ſtill deſtroy,
And, ſlumbering, ſmile at the imagin'd flame.

Not

Not ſo the Holland fleet, who, tir'd and done,
Stretch'd on their decks like weary oxen lie;
Faint ſweats all down their mighty members run,
(Vaſt bulks, which little ſouls but ill ſupply.)

In dreams they fearful precipices tread,
Or, ſhipwreck'd, labour to ſome diſtant ſhore:
Or, in dark churches, walk among the dead;
They wake with horror, and dare ſleep no more.

It is a general rule in poetry, that all appropriated terms of art ſhould be ſunk in general expreſſions, becauſe poetry is to ſpeak an univerſal language. This rule is ſtill ſtronger with regard to arts not liberal, or confined to few, and therefore far removed from common knowledge; and of this kind, certainly, is technical navigation. Yet Dryden was of opinion that a ſea-fight ought to be deſcribed in the nautical language; *and certainly*, ſays he, *as thoſe who in a logical diſputation keep to general terms would hide a fallacy, ſo thoſe who do it in any poetical deſcription would veil their ignorance.*

Let us then appeal to experience; for by experience at laſt we learn as well what will pleaſe as what will profit. In the battle, his terms ſeem to have been blown away; but he deals them liberally in the dock:

So here ſome pick out bullets from the ſide,
Some drive old *okum* thro' each *ſeam* and riſt:
Their left-hand does the *calking-iron* guide,
The rattling *mallet* with the right they liſt.

With boiling pitch another near at hand
(From friendly Sweden brought) the *ſeams inſtops:*
Which, well laid o'er, the ſalt-ſea waves withſtand,
And ſhake them from the riſing beak in drops.

Some the *gall'd* ropes with dawby *marling* bind,
Or ſear-cloth maſts with ſtrong *tarpawling* coats:

To

To try new *ſhrouds* one mounts into the wind,
And one below, their eaſe or ſtiffneſs notes.

I ſuppoſe here is not one term which every reader does not wiſh away.

His digreſſion to the original and progreſs of navigation, with his proſpect of the advancement which it ſhall receive from the Royal Society, then newly inſtituted, may be conſidered as an example ſeldom equalled of ſeaſonable excurſion and artful return.

One line, however, leaves me diſcontented; he ſays, that by the help of the philoſophers,

Inſtructed ſhips ſhall ſail to quick commerce,
By which remoteſt regions are allied.—

Which he is conſtrained to explain in a note, *By a more exact meaſure of longitude.* It had better become Dryden's learning and genius to have laboured ſcience into poetry, and have ſhewn, by explaining longitude, that verſe did not refuſe the ideas of philoſophy.

His deſcription of the Fire is painted by reflective meditation, out of a mind better formed to reaſon than to feel. The conflagration of a city, with all its tumults of concomitant diſtreſs, is one of the moſt dreadful ſpectacles which this world can offer to human eyes; yet it ſeems to raiſe little emotion in the breaſt of the poet; he watches the flame coolly from ſtreet to ſtreet, with now a reflection, and now a ſimile, till at laſt he meets the king, for whom he makes a ſpeech, rather tedious in a time ſo buſy; and then follows again the progreſs of the fire.

There are, however, in this part ſome paſſages that deſerve attention; as in the beginning:

The diligence of trade and noiſeful gain
And luxury more late aſleep were laid;

All

All was the night's, and in her ſilent reign
No ſound the reſt of Nature did invade
In this deep quiet—

The expreſſion *All was the night's* is taken from Seneca, who remarks on Virgil's line,

Omnia noctis erant placida compoſta quiete,

that he might have concluded better,

Omnia noctis erant.

The following quatrain is vigorous and animated:

The ghoſts of traytors from the bridge deſcend
With bold fanatick ſpectres to rejoice;
About the fire into a dance they bend,
And ſing their ſabbath notes with feeble voice.

His prediction of the improvements which ſhall be made in the new city, is elegant and poetical, and, with an event which Poets cannot always boaſt, has been happily verified. The poem concludes with a ſimile that might have better been omitted.

Dryden, when he wrote this poem, ſeems not yet fully to have formed his verſification, or ſettled his ſyſtem of propriety.

From this time, he addicted himſelf almoſt wholly to the ſtage, *to which*, ſays he, *my genius never much inclined me*, merely as the moſt profitable market for poetry. By writing tragedies in rhyme, he continued to improve his diction and his numbers. According to the opinion of *Harte*, who had ſtudied his works with great attention, he ſettled his principles of verſification in 1676, when he produced the play of *Aureng Zeb*; and according to his own account of the ſhort time in which he wrote *Tyrannick Love*, and the *State of Innocence*, he ſoon obtained the full effect of diligence, and added facility to exactneſs.

Rhyme has been ſo long baniſhed from the theatre, that we know not its effect upon the paſſions of an audience; but it has this convenience, that ſentences ſtand more independent on each other, and ſtriking paſſages are therefore eaſily ſelected and retained. Thus the deſcription of Night in the *Indian Emperor*, and the riſe and fall of empire in the *Conqueſt of Granada*, are more frequently repeated than any lines in *All for Love*, or *Don Sebaſtian*.

To ſearch his plays for vigorous ſallies, and ſententious elegances, or to fix the dates of any little pieces which he wrote by chance, or by ſolicitation, were labour too tedious and minute.

His dramatic labours did not ſo wholly abſorb his thoughts, but that he promulgated the laws of tranſlation in a preface to the Engliſh Epiſtles of Ovid; one of which he tranſlated himſelf, and another in conjunction with the Earl of Mulgrave.

Abſalom and Achitophel is a work ſo well known, that particular criticiſm is ſuperfluous. If it be conſidered as a poem political and controverſial, it will be found to comprife all the excellences of which the ſubject is ſuſceptible; acrimony of cenſure, elegance of praiſe, artful delineation of characters, variety and vigour of ſentiment, happy turns of language, and pleaſing harmony of numbers; and all theſe raiſed to ſuch a height as can ſcarcely be found in any other Engliſh compoſition.

It is not, however, without faults; ſome lines are inelegant or improper, and too many are irreligiously licentious. The original ſtructure of the poem was defective; allegories drawn to great length will always break; Charles could not run continually parallel with David.

The

The ſubject had likewiſe another inconvenience: it admitted little imagery or deſcription, and a long poem of mere ſentiments eaſily becomes tedious; though all the parts are forcible, and every line kindles new rapture, the reader, if not relieved by the interpoſition of ſomething that ſooths the fancy, grows weary of admiration, and defers the reſt.

As an approach to hiſtorical truth was neceſſary, the action and cataſtrophe were not in the poet's power; there is therefore an unpleaſing diſproportion between the beginning and the end. We are alarmed by a faction formed out of many ſects various in their principles, but agreeing in their purpoſe of miſchief, formidable for their numbers, and ſtrong by their ſupports, while the king's friends are few and weak. The chiefs on either part are ſet forth to view; but when expectation is at the height, the king makes a ſpeech, and

Henceforth a ſeries of new times began.

Who can forbear to think of an enchanted caſtle, with a wide moat and lofty battlements, walls of marble and gates of braſs, which vaniſhes at once into air, when the deſtined knight blows his horn before it?

In the ſecond part, written by *Tate*, there is a long inſertion, which, for poignancy of ſatire, exceeds any part of the former. Perſonal reſentment, though no laudable motive to ſatire, can add great force to general principles. Self-love is a buſy prompter.

The *Medal*, written upon the ſame principles with *Abſalom and Achitophel*, but upon a narrower plan, gives leſs pleaſure, though it diſcovers equal abilities in the writer. The ſuperſtructure cannot extend beyond the foundation; a ſingle character or incident cannot fur-

niſh as many ideas, as a ſeries of events, or multiplicity of agents. This poem therefore, ſince time has left it to itſelf, is not much read, nor perhaps generally underſtood; yet it abounds with touches both of humorous and ſerious ſatire. The picture of a man whoſe propenſions to miſchief are ſuch, that his beſt actions are but inability of wickedneſs, is very ſkilfully delineated and ſtrongly coloured:

> Power was his aim: but thrown from that pretence,
> The wretch turn'd loyal in his own defence,
> And malice reconcil'd him to his Prince,
> Him, in the anguiſh of his ſoul, he ſerv'd;
> Rewarded faſter ſtill than he deſerv'd:
> Behold him now exalted into truſt;
> His counſels oft convenient, ſeldom juſt,
> Ev'n in the moſt ſincere advice he gave,
> He had a grudging ſtill to be a knave.
> The frauds he learnt in his fanatic years,
> Made him uneaſy in his lawful gears:
> At leaſt as little honeſt as he cou'd:
> And, like white witches, miſchievouſly good.
> To this firſt bias, longingly, he leans,
> And rather would be great by wicked means.

The *Threnodia*, which, by a term I am afraid neither authorized nor analogical, he calls *Auguſtalis*, is not among his happieſt productions. Its firſt and obvious defect is the irregularity of its metre, to which the ears of that age, however, were accuſtomed. What is worſe, it has neither tenderneſs nor dignity, it is neither magnificent nor pathetick. He ſeems to look round him for images which he cannot find, and what he has he diſtorts by endeavouring to enlarge them. He is, he ſays, *petrified with grief*; but the marble ſometimes relents, and trickles in a joke.

The

The ſons of art all med'cines try'd,
And every noble remedy apply'd;
With emulation each eſſay'd
His utmoſt ſkill; *nay more they pray'd:*
Was never loſing game with better conduct play'd.

He had been a little inclined to merriment before upon the prayers of a nation for their dying ſovereign, nor was he ſerious enough to keep heathen fables out of his religion;

With him th' innumerable crowd of armed prayers
Knock'd at the gates of heaven, and knock'd aloud;
The firſt well-meaning rude petitioners,
All for his life aſſail'd the throne,
All would have brib'd the ſkies by offering up their own.
So great a throng not heaven itſelf could bar;
'Twas almoſt borne by force *as in the giants war.*
The prayers, at leaſt, for his reprieve were heard;
His death, like Hezekiah's, was deferr'd.

There is throughout the compoſition a deſire of ſplendor without wealth. In the concluſion he ſeems too much pleaſed with the proſpect of the new reign to have lamented his old maſter with much ſincerity.

He did not miſcarry in this attempt for want of ſkill either in lyrick or elegiack poetry. His poem *on the death* of Mrs. *Killegrew* is undoubtedly the nobleſt ode that our language ever has produced. The firſt part flows with a torrent of enthuſiaſm. *Fervet immenſuſque ruit.* All the ſtanzas indeed are not equal. An imperial crown cannot be one continued diamond; the gems muſt be held together by ſome leſs valuable matter.

In his firſt ode for Cecilia's day, which is loſt in the ſplendor of the ſecond, there are paſſages which would

have dignified any other poet. The firſt ſtanza is vigorous and elegant, though the word *diapaſon* is too technical, and the rhymes are too remote from one another:

From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This univerſal frame began:
When nature underneath a heap of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high,
Ariſe ye more than dead.
Then cold and hot, and moiſt and dry,
In order to their ſtations leap,
And muſick's power obey.
From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This univerſal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compaſs of the notes it ran,
The diapaſon cloſing full in man.

The concluſion is likewiſe ſtriking, but it includes an image ſo awful in itſelf, that it can owe little to poetry; and I could wiſh the antitheſis of *muſick untuning* had found ſome other place.

As from the power of ſacred lays
The ſpheres began to move,
And ſung the great Creator's praiſe
To all the bleſs'd above.
So when the laſt and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant ſhall devour,
The trumpet ſhall be heard on high,
The dead ſhall live, the living die,
And muſick ſhall untune the ſky.

Of his ſkill in Elegy he has given a ſpecimen in his *Eleonora*, of which the following lines diſcover the author:

Though

Though all theſe rare endowments of the mind
Were in a narrow ſpace of life confin'd,
The figure was with full perfection crown'd;
Though not ſo large an orb, as truly round:
As when in glory, through the public place,
The ſpoils of conquer'd nations were to paſs,
And but one day for triumph was allow'd,
The conſul was conſtrain'd his pomp to crowd;
And ſo the ſwift proceſſion hurry'd on,
That all, though not diſtinctly, might be ſhown:
So in the ſtraiten'd bounds of life confin'd,
She gave but glimpſes of her glorious mind:
And multitudes of virtues paſs'd along;
Each preſſing foremoſt in the mighty throng,
Ambitious to be ſeen, and then make room
For greater multitudes that were to come.
Yet unemploy'd no minute ſlipp'd away;
Moments were precious in ſo ſhort a ſtay.
The haſte of heaven to have her was ſo great,
That ſome were ſingle acts, though each compleat;
And every act ſtood ready to repeat.

This piece, however, is not without its faults; there is ſo much likeneſs in the initial compariſon, that there is no illuſtration. As a king would be lamented, Eleonora was lamented:

As when ſome great and gracious monarch dies,
Soft whiſpers, firſt, and mournful murmurs, riſe
Among the ſad attendants; then the ſound
Soon gathers voice, and ſpreads the news around,
Through town and courntry, till the dreadful blaſt
Is blown to diſtant colonies at laſt;
Who, then, perhaps, were offering vows in vain,
For his long life, and for his happy reign;
So ſlowly by degrees, unwilling fame
Did matchleſs Eleonora's fate proclaim,
Till publick as the loſs the news became.

This is little better than to ſay in praiſe of a ſhrub, that it is as green as a tree; or of a brook, that it waters a garden, as a river waters a country.

Dryden confeſſes that he did not know the lady whom he celebrates: the praiſe being therefore inevitably general, fixes no impreſſion upon the reader, nor excites any tendency to love, nor much deſire of imitation. Knowledge of the ſubject is to the poet, what durable materials are to the architect.

The *Religio Laici*, which borrows its title from the *Religio Medici* of Browne, is almoſt the only work of Dryden which can be conſidered as a voluntary effuſion; in this, therefore, it might be hoped, that the full effulgence of his genius would be found. But unhappily the ſubject is rather argumentative than poetical: he intended only a ſpecimen of metrical diſputation.

> And this unpoliſh'd rugged verſe I choſe,
> As fitteſt for diſcourſe, and neareſt proſe.

This, however, is a compoſition of great excellence in its kind, in which the familiar is very properly diverſified with the ſolemn, and the grave with the humorous; in which metre has neither weakened the force, nor clouded the perſpicuity of argument; nor will it be eaſy to find another example equally happy of this middle kind of writing, which, though proſaick in ſome parts, riſes to high poetry in others, and neither towers to the ſkies, nor creeps along the ground.

Of the ſame kind, or not far diſtant from it, is the *Hind and Panther*, the longeſt of all Dryden's original poems; an allegory intended to comprize and to decide the controverſy between the Romaniſts and Proteſtants.

The ſcheme of the work is injudicious and incommodious; for what can be more abſurd than that one beaſt ſhould counſel another to reſt her faith upon a pope and council? He ſeems well enough ſkilled in the uſual topicks of argument, endeavours to ſhew the neceſſity of an infallible judge, and reproaches the Reformers with want of unity; but is weak enough to aſk why ſince we ſee without knowing how, we may not have an infallible judge without knowing where.

The *Hind* at one time is afraid to drink at the common brook, becauſe ſhe may be worried; but walking home with the *Panther*, talks by the way of the *Nicene Fathers*, and at laſt declares herſelf to be the Catholic church.

This abſurdity was very properly ridiculed in the *City Mouſe* and *Country Mouſe* of *Montague* and *Prior*; and in the detection and cenſure of the incongruity of the fiction, chiefly conſiſts the value of their performance, which, whatever reputation it might obtain by the help of temporary paſſions, ſeems to readers almoſt a century diſtant, not very forcible or animated.

Pope, whoſe judgment was perhaps a little bribed by the ſubject, uſed to mention this poem as the moſt correct ſpecimen of Dryden's verſification. It was indeed written when he had completely formed his manner, and may be ſuppoſed to exhibit, negligence excepted, his deliberate and ultimate ſcheme of metre.

We may therefore reaſonably infer, that he did not approve the perpetual uniformity which confines the ſenſe to couplets, ſince he has broken his lines in the initial paragraph.

A milk-

A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchain'd,
Fed on the lawns, and in the foreſt rang'd:
Without unſpotted, innocent within,
She fear'd no danger, for ſhe knew no ſin.
Yet had ſhe oft been chac'd with horns and hounds
And Scythian ſhafts, and many winged wounds
Aim'd at her heart; was often forc'd to fly,
And doom'd to death, though fated not to die.

Theſe lines are lofty, elegant and muſical, notwithſtanding the interruption of the pauſe, of which the effect is rather increaſe of pleaſure by variety, than offence by ruggedneſs.

To the firſt part it was his intention, he ſays, *to give the majeſtick turn of heroick poeſy*; and perhaps he might have executed his deſign not unſucceſsfully, had not an opportunity of ſatire, which he cannot forbear, fallen ſometimes in his way The character of a Preſbyterian, whoſe emblem is the *Wolf*, is not very heroically majeſtick:

More haughty than the reſt, the wolfiſh race
Appear with belly gaunt and famiſh'd face:
Never was ſo deform'd a beaſt of grace.
His ragged tail betwixt his legs he wears,
Cloſe clapp'd for ſhame; but his rough creſt he rears,
And pricks up his predeſtinating ears.

His general character of the other ſorts of beaſts that never go to church, though ſpritely and keen, has, however, not much of heroick poeſy:

Theſe are the chief; to number o'er the reſt,
And ſtand like Adam naming every beaſt,
Were weary work; nor will the Muſe deſcribe
A ſlimy-born, and ſun-begotten tribe;
Who, far from ſteeples and their ſacred ſound,
In fields their ſullen conventicles found.

Theſe

Theſe groſs, half-animated, lumps I leave;
Nor can I think what thoughts they can conceive;
But if they think at all, 'tis ſure no higher,
Than matter, put in motion, may aſpire;
Souls that can ſcarce ferment their maſs of clay;
So droſſy, ſo diviſible, are they,
As would but ſerve pure bodies for allay;
Such ſquls as ſhards produce, ſuch beetle things
As only buz to heaven with evening wings;
Strike in the dark, offending but by chance;
Such are the blindfold blows of ignorance.
They know not beings, and but hate a name;
To them the Hind and Panther are the ſame.

One more inſtance, and that taken from the narrative part, where ſtyle was more in his choice, will ſhow how ſteadily he kept his reſolution of heroick dignity.

For when the herd, ſuffic'd, did late repair
To ferney heaths and to their foreſt laire,
She made a mannerly excuſe to ſtay,
Proffering the Hind to wait her half the way:
That, ſince the ſky was clear, an hour of talk
Might help her to beguile the tedious walk.
With much good-will the motion was embrac'd,
To chat awhile on their adventures paſt:
Nor had the grateful Hind ſo ſoon forgot
Her friend and fellow-ſufferer in the plot.
Yet, wondering how of late ſhe grew eſtrang'd,
Her forehead cloudy and her count'nance chang'd,
She thought this hour th' occaſion would preſent
To learn her ſecret cauſe of diſcontent,
Which well ſhe hop'd might be with eaſe redreſs'd,
Conſidering her a well-bred civil beaſt,
And more a gentlewoman than the reſt.
After ſome common talk what rumours ran,
The lady of the ſpotted muff began.

The ſecond and third parts he profeſſes to have reduced to diction more familiar and more ſuitable to diſpute and converſation; the difference is not, however, very eaſily perceived; the firſt has familiar, and the two others have ſonorous, lines. The original incongruity runs through the whole; the king is now *Ceſar*, and now the *Lyon*; and the name *Pan* is given to the Supreme Being.

But when this conſtitutional abſurdity is forgiven, the poem muſt be confeſſed to be written with great ſmoothneſs of metre, a wide extent of knowledge, and an abundant multiplicity of images; the controverſy is embelliſhed with pointed ſentences, diverſified by illuſtrations, and enlivened by ſallies of invective. Some of the facts to which alluſions are made, are now become obſcure, and perhaps there may be many ſatirical paſſages little underſtood.

As it was by its nature a work of defiance, a compoſition which would naturally be examined with the utmoſt acrimony of criticiſm, it was probably laboured with uncommon attention; and there are, indeed, few negligences in the ſubordinate parts. The original impropriety, and the ſubſequent unpopularity of the ſubject, added to the ridiculouſneſs of its firſt elements, has ſunk it into neglect; but it may be uſefully ſtudied, as an example of poetical ratiocination, in which the argument ſuffers little from the metre.

In the poem on *the Birth of the Prince of Wales*, nothing is very remarkable but the exorbitant adulation, and that inſenſibility of the precipice on which the king was then ſtanding, which the laureat apparently ſhared with the reſt of the courtiers. A few months cured

cured him of controverſy, diſmiſſed him from court, and made him again a play-wright and tranſlator.

Of Juvenal there had been a tranſlation by Stapylton, and another by Holiday; neither of them is very poetical. Stapylton is more ſmooth, and Holiday's is more eſteemed for the learning of his notes. A new verſion was propoſed to the poets of that time, and undertaken by them in conjunction. The main deſign was conducted by Dryden, whoſe reputation was ſuch that no man was unwilling to ſerve the Muſes under him.

The general character of this tranſlation will be given, when it is ſaid to preſerve the wit, but to want the dignity of the original. The peculiarity of Juvenal is a mixture of gaiety and ſtateline's, of pointed ſentences and declamatory grandeur. His points have not been neglected; but his grandeur none of the band ſeemed to conſider as neceſſary to be imitated, except *Creech*, who undertook the thirteenth ſatire. It is therefore perhaps poſſible to give a better repreſentation of that great ſatiriſt, even in thoſe parts which Dryden himſelf has tranſlated, ſome paſſages excepted, which will never be excelled.

With Juvenal was publiſhed Perſius, tranſlated wholly by Dryden. This work, though like all the other productions of Dryden it may have ſhining parts, ſeems to have been written merely for wages, in an uniform mediocrity, without any eager endeavour after excellence, or laborious effort of the mind.

There wanders an opinion among the readers of poetry, that one of theſe ſatires is an exerciſe of the ſchool. Dryden, ſays that he once tranſlated it at ſchool; but not that he preſerved or publiſhed the juvenile performance.

Not

Not long afterwards he undertook perhaps the moſt arduous work of its kind, a tranſlation of Virgil, for which he had ſhewn how well he was qualified by his verſion of the Pollio, and two epiſodes, one of Niſus and Euryalus, the other of Mezentius and Lauſus.

In the compariſon of Homer and Virgil, the diſcriminative excellence of Homer is elevation and comprehenſion of thought, and that of Virgil is grace and ſplendor of diction. The beauties of Homer are therefore difficult to be loſt, and thoſe of Virgil difficult to be retained. The maſſy trunk of ſentiment is ſafe by its ſolidity, but the bloſſoms of elocution eaſily drop away. The author, having the choice of his own images, ſelects thoſe which he can beſt adorn: the tranſlator muſt, at all hazards, follow his original, and expreſs thoughts which perhaps he would not have choſen. When to this primary difficulty is added the inconvenience of a language ſo much inferior in harmony to the Latin, it cannot be expected that they who read the Georgick and the Eneid ſhould be much delighted with any verſion.

All theſe obſtacles Dryden ſaw, and all theſe he determined to encounter. The expectation of his work was undoubtedly great; the nation conſidered its honour as intereſted in the event. One gave him the different editions of his author, and another helped him in the ſubordinate parts. The arguments of the ſeveral books were given him by Addiſon.

The hopes of the publick were not diſappointed. He produced, ſays Pope, *the moſt noble and ſpirited tranſlation that I know in any language.* It certainly excelled whatever had appeared in Engliſh, and appears to have ſatisfied his friends, and, for the moſt part,

to

to have ſilenced his enemies. Milbourne, indeed, a clergyman, attacked it; but his outrages ſeem to be the ebullitions of a mind agitated by ſtronger reſentment than bad poetry can excite, and previouſly reſolved not to be pleaſed.

His criticiſm extends only to the Preface, Paſtorals, and Georgicks; and, as he profeſſes, to give his antagoniſt an opportunity of repriſal, he has added his own verſion of the firſt and fourth Paſtorals, and the firſt Georgick. The world has forgotten his book; but ſince his attempt has given him a place in literary hiſtory, I will preſerve a ſpecimen of his criticiſm, by inſerting his remarks on the invocation before the firſt Georgick, and of his poetry, by annexing his own verſion.

Ver. 1. "*What makes a plenteous harveſt, when to* "*turn, The fruitful ſoil, and when to ſow the corn*—It's "*unlucky*, they ſay, *to ſtumble at the threſhold*, but what "has a *plenteous harveſt* to do here? *Virgil* would not "pretend to preſcribe *rules* for *that* which depends not "on the *huſbandman's* care, but the *diſpoſition of Heaven* "altogether. Indeed, the *plenteous crop* depends ſome-"what on the *good method of tillage*, and where the "*land*'s ill manur'd, the *corn*, without a miracle, can "be but *indifferent*; but the *harveſt* may be *good*, "which is its *propereſt* epithet, tho' the *huſbandman's* "*ſkill* were never ſo *indifferent*. The next *ſentence* is "*too literal*, and *when to plough* had been *Virgil's* "meaning, and intelligible to every body; and *when* "*to ſow the corn*, is a needleſs *addition*."

Ver. 3. "*The care of ſheep, of oxen, and of kine, And* "*when to geld the lambs, and ſheer the ſwine*, would as "well have fallen under the *cura boum, qui cultus ha-*"*bendo ſit pecori*, as Mr. *D's deduction* of particulars."

Ver.

Ver. 5. " *The birth and genius of the frugal bee, I ſing,* " Mæcenas, *and I ſing to thee.*—But where did *experientia* ever ſignify *birth and genius?* or what ground " was there for ſuch a *figure* in this place? How much " more manly is Mr. *Ogylby's* verſion!

" What makes rich grounds, in what celeſtial ſigns,
" 'Tis good to plough, and marry elms with vines.
" What beſt fits cattle, what with ſheep agrees,
" And ſeveral arts improving frugal bees,
" I ſing, *Mæcenas.*

" Which four lines, tho' faulty enough, are yet much " more to the purpoſe than Mr. *D's* ſix."

Ver. 22. " *From fields and mountains to my ſong repair.* " For *patrium linquens nemus, ſaltuſque Lycæi*—Very " well explained!"

Ver. 23, 24. " *Inventor* Pallas, *of the fattening oil,* " *Thou founder of the plough, and ploughman's toil!* " Written as if *theſe* had been *Pallas's invention. The* " *ploughman's toil*'s impertinent."

Ver. 25. "—*The ſhroud-like cypreſs*—Why *ſhroud-* " *like?* Is a *cypreſs* pulled up by the *roots*, which the " *ſculpture* in the *laſt Eclogue* fills *Silvanus's* hand with, " ſo very like a *ſhroud?* Or did not Mr. *D.* think of " that kind of *cypreſs* us'd often for *ſcarves and hat-* " *bands* at funerals formerly, or for *widow's veils*, &c. " if ſo, 'twas a *deep good thought.*"

Ver. 26. "—*That wear the royal honours, and increaſe* " *the year*—What's meant by *increaſing the year?* Did " the *gods* or *goddeſſes* add more *months*, or *days*, or " *hours* to it? Or how can *arva tueri*—ſignify to *wear* " *rural honours?* Is this to *tranſlate*, or *abuſe* an *au-* " *thor?* The next *couplet* is borrow'd from *Ogylby*, I " ſuppoſe, becauſe *leſs to the purpoſe* than ordinary.

Ver.

Ver. 33. " *The patron of the world, and* Rome's *peculiar guard—Idle*, and none of *Virgil's*, no more than the ſenſe of the *precedent couplet*; ſo again, he " *interpolates Virgil* with that and *the round circle of the year to guide powerful of bleſſings, which thou ſtrew'ſt around.* A ridiculous *Latiniſm*, and an *impertinent addition*; indeed the whole *period* is but one piece of *abſurdity* and *nonſenſe*, as thoſe who lay it with the *original* muſt find."

Ver. 42, 43. " *And* Neptune *ſhall reſign the faſces of the ſea.* Was he *conſul* or *dictator* there? *And watry virgins for thy bed ſhall ſtrive.* Both abſurd *interpolations.*"

Ver. 47, 48. " *Where in the void of heaven a place is free.* Ah happy *D—n*, were *that place* for thee! But where is *that void?* Or what does our *tranſlator* mean by it? He knows what *Ovid* ſays *God* did, to prevent ſuch a *void* in heaven; perhaps, this was then forgotten: but *Virgil* talks more ſenſibly."

Ver. 49. " *The ſcorpion ready to receive thy laws.* No, he would not then have *gotten out of his way* ſo faſt."

" Ver. 56. " *The Proſerpine affects her ſilent ſeat*— What made *her* then ſo *angry* with *Aſcalaphus*, for preventing her return? She was now mus'd to *Patience* under the *determinations of Fate*, rather than *fond* of her *reſidence.*"

Ver. 61, 2, 3. " *Pity the poet's, and the plough-man's cares, Intereſt thy greatneſs in our mean affairs. And uſe thyſelf betimes to hear our prayers.* Which is ſuch a wretched *perverſion* of *Virgil's noble thought* as *Vicars* would have bluſh'd at; but Mr. *Ogylby* makes us ſome amends, by his better lines:

" Oh whereſoe'er thou art, from thence incline,
" And grant aſſiſtance to my bold deſign!

" Pity with me, poor huſbandmen's affairs,
' And now, as if tranſlated, hear our prayers.

" This is *ſenſe*, and *to the purpoſe*: the other, poor *miſtaken ſtuff*."

Such were the ſtrictures of Milbourne, who found few abettors; and of whom it may be reaſonably imagined, that many who favoured his deſign were aſhamed of his inſolence.

When admiration had ſubſided, the tranſlation was more coolly examined, and found like all others, to be ſometimes erroneous, and ſometimes licentious. Thoſe who could find faults, thought they could avoid them; and Dr. Brady attempted in blank verſe a tranſlation of the Eneid, which, when dragged into the world, did not live long enough to cry. I have never ſeen it; but that ſuch a verſion there is, or has been, perhaps ſome old catalogue informed me.

With not much better ſucceſs, Trapp, when his Tragedy and his Prelections had given him reputation, attempted another blank verſion of the Eneid; to which, notwithſtanding the ſlight regard with which it was treated, he had afterwards perſeverance enough to add the Eclogues and Georgicks. His book may continue its exiſtence as long as it is the clandeſtine refuge of ſchoolboys.

Since the Engliſh ear has been accuſtomed to the melliſluence of Pope's numbers, and the diction of poetry has become more ſplendid, new attempts have been made to tranſlate Virgil; and all his works have been attempted by men better qualified to contend with Dryden. I will not engage myſelf in an invidious compariſon by oppoſing one paſſage to another; ſuch

work of which there would be no end, and which might be often offenſive without uſe.

It is not by comparing line with line that the merit of great works is to be eſtimated, but by their general effects and ultimate reſult. It is eaſy to note a weak line, and write one more vigorous in its place; to find a happineſs of expreſſion in the original; and tranſplant it by force into the verſion: but what is given to the parts, may be ſubducted from the whole, and the reader may be weary, though the critick may commend. Works of imagination excel by their allurement and delight; by their power of attracting and detaining the attention. That book is good in vain, which the reader throws away. He only is the maſter, who keeps the mind in pleaſing captivity; whoſe pages are peruſed with eagerneſs, and in hope of new pleaſure are peruſed again; and whoſe concluſion is perceived with an eye of ſorrow, ſuch as the traveller caſts upon departing day.

By his proportion of this predomination I will conſent that Dryden ſhould be tried; of this, which, in oppoſition to reaſon, makes Arioſto the darling and the pride of Italy; of this, which, in defiance of criticiſm, continues Shakſpeare the ſovereign of the drama.

His laſt work was his *Fables*, in which he gave us the firſt example of a mode of writing which the Italians call *refaccimento*, a renovation of ancient writers, by modernizing their language. Thus the old poem of *Boiardo* has been new-dreſſed by *Domenichi* and *Berni*. The works of Chaucer, upon which this kind of rejuveneſcence has been beſtowed by Dryden, require little criticiſm. The tale of the Cock ſeems hardly worth revival; and the ſtory of *Palamon* and *Arcite*,

containing an action unſuitable to the times in which it is placed, can hardly be ſuffered to paſs without cenſure of the hyperbolical commendation which Dryden has given it in the general Preface, and in a poetical Dedication, a piece where his original fondneſs of remote conceits ſeems to have revived.

Of the three pieces borrowed from Boccace *Sigiſmunda* may be defended by the celebrity of the ſtory. *Theodore* and *Honoria*, though it contains not much moral, yet afforded opportunities of ſtriking deſcription. And *Cymon* was formerly a tale of ſuch reputation, that, at the revival of letters, it was tranſlated into Latin by one of the *Beroalds*.

Whatever ſubjects employed his pen, he was ſtill improving our meaſures and embelliſhing our language.

In this volume are interſperſed ſome ſhort original poems, which, with his prologues, epilogues, and ſongs, may be compriſed in Congreve's remark, that even thoſe, if he had written nothing elſe, would have entitled him to the praiſe of excellence in his kind.

One compoſition muſt however be diſtinguiſhed. The ode for *St. Cecilia's* Day, perhaps the laſt effort of his poetry, has been always conſidered as exhibiting the higheſt flight of fancy, and the exacteſt nicety of art. This is allowed to ſtand without a rival. If indeed there is any excellence beyond it, in ſome other of Dryden's works that excellence muſt be found. Compared with the Ode on *Killigrew*, it may be pronounced perhaps ſuperiour in the whole; but without any ſingle part, equal to the firſt ſtanza of the other.

It is ſaid to have coſt Dryden a fortnight's labour; but it does not want its negligences: ſome of the lines are without correſpondent rhymes; a defect, which I never detected but after an acquaintance of many years, and which the enthuſiaſm of the writer might hinder him from perceiving.

His laſt ſtanza has leſs emotion than the former; but is not leſs elegant in the diction. The concluſion is vicious; the muſick of *Timotheus*, which *raiſed a mortal to the ſkies*, had only a metaphorical power; that of *Cecilia*, which *drew an angel down*, had a real effect: the crown therefore could not reaſonably be divided.

IN a general ſurvey of Dryden's labours, he appears to have a mind very comprehenſive by nature, and much enriched with acquired knowledge. His compoſitions are the effects of a vigorous genius operating upon large materials.

The power that predominated in his intellectual operations, was rather ſtrong reaſon than quick ſenſibility. Upon all occaſions that were preſented, he ſtudied rather than felt, and produced ſentiments not ſuch as Nature enforces, but meditation ſupplies. With the ſimple and elemental paſſions, as they ſpring ſeparate in the mind, he ſeems not much acquainted; and ſeldom deſcribes them but as they are complicated by the various relations of ſociety, and confuſed in the tumults and agitations of life.

What he ſays of love may contribute to the explanation of his character:

Love various minds does variouſly inſpire;
It ſtirs in gentle boſoms gentle fire,
Like that of incenſe on the altar laid;
But raging flames tempeſtuous ſouls invade;

A fire which every windy paſſion blows,
With pride it mounts, or with revenge it glows.

Dryden's was not one of the *gentle boſoms*: Love, as it ſubſiſts in itſelf, with no tendency but to the perſon loved, and wiſhing only for correſpondent kindneſs; ſuch love as ſhuts out all other intereſt; the Love of the Golden Age, was too ſoft and ſubtle to put his faculties in motion. He hardly conceived it but in its turbulent effervescence with ſome other deſires; when it was inflamed by rivalry, or obſtructed by difficulties: when it invigorated ambition, or exaſperated revenge.

He is therefore, with all his variety of excellence, not often pathetick; and had ſo little ſenſibility of the power of effuſions purely natural, that he did not eſteem them in others. Simplicity gave him no pleaſure; and for the firſt part of his life he looked on *Otway* with contempt, though at laſt, indeed very late, he confeſſed that in his play *there* was *Nature, which is the chief beauty.*

We do not always know our own motives. I am not certain whether it was not rather the difficulty which he found in exhibiting the genuine operations of the heart, than a ſervile ſubmiſſion to an injudicious audience, that filled his plays with falſe magnificence. It was neceſſary to fix attention; and the mind can be captivated only by recollection, or by curioſity; by reviving natural ſentiments, or impreſſing new appearances of things: ſentences were readier at his call than images; he could more eaſily fill the ear with ſome ſplendid novelty, than awaken thoſe ideas that ſlumber in the heart.

The

The favourite exerciſe of his mind was ratiocination; and, that argument might not be too ſoon at an end, he delighted to talk of liberty and neceſſity, deſtiny and contingence; theſe he diſcuſſes in the language of the ſchool with ſo much profundity, that the terms which he uſes are not always underſtood. It is indeed learning, but learning out of place.

When once he had engaged himſelf in diſputation, thoughts flowed in on either ſide: he was now no longer at a loſs; he had always objections and ſolutions at command; *verbaque proviſam rem*—give him matter for his verſe, and he finds without difficulty verſe for his matter.

In Comedy, for which he profeſſes himſelf not naturally qualified, the mirth which he excites will perhaps not be found ſo much to ariſe from any original humour, or peculiarity of character nicely diſtinguiſhed and diligently purſued, as from incidents and circumſtances, artifices and ſurprizes; from jeſts of action rather than of ſentiment. What he had of humorous or paſſionate, he ſeems to have had not from nature, but from other poets; if not always as a plagiary, at leaſt as an imitator.

Next to argument, his delight was in wild and daring ſallies of ſentiment, in the irregular and excentrick violence of wit. He delighted to tread upon the brink of meaning, where light and darkneſs begin to mingle; to approach the precipice of abſurdity, and hover over the abyſs of unideal vacancy. This inclination ſometimes produced nonſenſe, which he knew; as,

Move ſwiftly, ſun, and fly a lover's pace,
Leave weeks and months behind thee in thy race.
Amariel flies
To guard thee from the demons of the air;

My flaming ſword above them to diſplay,
All keen, and ground upon the edge of day.

And ſometimes it iſſued in abſurdities, of which perhaps he was not conſcious:

Then we upon our orb's laſt verge ſhall go,
And ſee the ocean leaning on the ſky;
From thence our rolling neighbours we ſhall know,
And on the lunar world ſecurely pry.

Theſe lines have no meaning; but may we not ſay, in imitation of Cowley on another book,

'Tis ſo like *ſenſe* 'twill ſerve the turn as well?

This endeavour after the grand and the new, produced many ſentiments either great or bulky, and many images either juſt or ſplendid:

I am as free as Nature firſt made man,
Ere the baſe laws of ſervitude began,
When wild in woods the noble ſavage ran.

—'Tis but becauſe the Living death ne'er knew,
They fear to prove it as a thing that's new:
Let me th' experiment before you try,
I'll ſhow you firſt how eaſy 'tis to die.

—There with a foreſt of their darts he ſtrove,
And ſtood like *Capaneus* defying Jove;
With his broad ſword the boldeſt beating down,
While Fate grew pale leſt he ſhould win the town,
And turn'd the iron leaves of his dark book
To make new dooms, or mend what it miſtook.

—I beg no pity for this mouldering clay;
For if you give it burial, there it takes
Poſſeſſion of your earth;
If burnt, and ſcatter'd in the air, the winds
That ſtrew my duſt diffuſe my royalty,
And ſpread me o'er your clime; for where one atom
Of mine ſhall light, know there Sebaſtian reigns.

Of

Of theſe quotations the two firſt may be allowed to be great, the two latter only tumid.

Of ſuch ſelection there is no end. I will add only a few more paſſages; of which the firſt, though it may perhaps not be quite clear in proſe, is not too obſcure for poetry, as the meaning that it has is noble;

No, there is a neceſſity in Fate,
Why ſtill the brave bold man is fortunate;
He keeps his object ever full in ſight,
And that aſſurance holds him firm and right;
True, 'tis a narrow way that leads to bliſs,
But right before there is no precipice;
Fear makes men look aſide, and ſo their footing miſs.

Of the images which the two following citations afford, the firſt is elegant, the ſecond magnificent; whether either be juſt, let the reader judge:

What precious drops are theſe,
Which ſilently each other's track purſue,
Bright as young diamonds in their infant dew?

——Reſign your caſtle——
—Enter, brave Sir; for when you ſpeak the word,
The gates ſhall open of their own accord;
The genius of the place its Lord ſhall meet,
And bow its towery forehead at your feet.

Theſe burſts of extravagance, Dryden calls the *Dalilahs* of the Theatre; and owns that many noiſy lines of Maxamin and Almanzor call out for vengeance upon him; but I *knew*, ſays he, *that they were bad enough to pleaſe, even when I wrote them*. There is ſurely reaſon to ſuſpect that he pleaſed himſelf as well as his audience; and that theſe, like the harlots of other men, had his love, though not his approbation.

He

He had ſometimes faults of a leſs generous and ſplendid kind. He makes, like almoſt all other poets, very frequent uſe of mythology, and ſometimes connects religion and fable too closely without diſtinction.

He deſcends to diſplay his knowledge with pedantick oſtentation; as when, in tranſlating Virgil, he ſays, *tack to the larboard*—a *veer ſtarboard*; and talks, in another work, of *virtue coming before the wind*. His vanity now and then betrays his ignorance:

They Nature's king through Nature's opticks view'd;
Revers'd they view'd him leſſen'd to their eyes.

He had heard of reverſing a teleſcope, and unluckily reverſes the object.

He is ſometimes unexpectedly mean. When he deſcribes the Supreme Being as moved by prayer to ſtop the Fire of London, what is his expreſſion?

A hollow cryſtal pyramid he takes,
In firmamental waters dipp'd above,
Of this a broad *extinguiſher* he makes,
And *boods* the flames that to their quarry ſtrove.

When he deſcribes the Laſt Day, and the deciſive tribunal, he intermingles this image:

When rattling bones together fly,
From the four quarters of the ſky.

It was indeed never in his power to reſiſt the temptation of a jeſt. In his Elegy on Cromwell:

No ſooner was the Frenchman's cauſe embrac'd,
Than the *light Monſieur* the *grave Don* outweigh'd;
His fortune turn'd the ſcale———

He had a vanity, unworthy of his abilities, to ſhew, as may be ſuſpected, the rank of the company with whom he lived, by the uſe of French words, which

had then crept into converſation; ſuch as *fraicheur* for *coolneſs*, *fougue* for *turbulence*, and a few more, none of which the language has incorporated or retained. They continue only where they ſtood firſt, perpetual warnings to future innovators.

Theſe are his faults of affectation; his faults of negligence are beyond recital. Such is the unevenneſs of his compoſitions, that ten lines are ſeldom found together without ſomething of which the reader is aſhamed. Dryden was no rigid judge of his own pages; he ſeldom ſtruggled after ſupreme excellence, but ſnatched in haſte what was within his reach; and when he could content others, was himſelf contented. He did not keep preſent to his mind an idea of pure perfection; nor compare his works, ſuch as they were, with what they might be made. He knew to whom he ſhould be oppoſed. He had more muſick than Waller, more vigour than Denham, and more nature than Cowley; and from his contemporaries he was in no danger. Standing therefore in the higheſt place, he had no care to riſe by contending with himſelf; but while there was no name above his own, was willing to enjoy fame on the eaſieſt terms.

He was no lover of labour. What he thought ſufficient, he did not ſtop to make better; and allowed himſelf to leave many parts unfiniſhed, in confidence that the good lines would overbalance the bad. What he had once written, he diſmiſſed from his thoughts; and, I believe, there is no example to be found of any correction or improvement made by him after publication. The haſtineſs of his productions might be the effect of neceſſity; but his ſubſequent neglect could hardly have any other cauſe than impatience of ſtudy.

What can be ſaid of his verſification, will be little more than a dilatation of the praiſe given it by Pope:

> Waller was ſmooth; but Dryden taught to join
> The varying verſe, the full-reſounding line,
> The long majeſtick march, and energy divine.

Some improvements had been already made in Engliſh numbers; but the full force of our language was not yet felt; the verſe that was ſmooth was commonly feeble. If Cowley had ſometimes a finiſhed line, he had it by chance. Dryden knew how to chuſe the flowing and the ſonorous words; to vary the pauſes, and adjuſt the accents; to diverſify the cadence, and yet preſerve the ſmoothneſs of his metre.

Of Triplets and Alexandrines, though he did not introduce the uſe, he eſtabliſhed it. The triplet has long ſubſiſted among us. Dryden ſeems not to have traced it higher than to Chapman's Homer; but it is to be found in Phaer's Virgil, written in the reign of Mary; and in Hall's Satires, publiſhed five years before the death of Elizabeth.

The Alexandrine was, I believe, firſt uſed by Spenſer, for the ſake of cloſing his ſtanza with a fuller ſound. We had a longer meaſure of fourteen ſyllables, into which the Eneid was tranſlated by Phaer, and other works of the ancients by other writers; of which Chapman's Iliad was, I believe, the laſt.

The two firſt lines of *Phaer*'s third Eneid will exemplify this meaſure:

> When Aſia's ſtate was overthrown, and Priam's kingdom ſtout,
> All guiltleſs, by the power of gods above was rooted out.

As

As theſe lines had their break or *cæſura*, always at the eighth ſyllable, it was thought, in time, commodious to divide them; and quatrains of lines, alternately, conſiſting of eight and ſix ſyllables, make the moſt ſoft and pleaſing of our lyrick meaſures; as,

Relentleſs Time, deſtroying power,
Which ſtone and braſs obey,
Who giv'ſt to every flying hour
To work ſome new decay.

In the Alexandrine, when its power was once felt, ſome poems, as *Drayton's Polyolbion*, were wholly written; and ſometimes the meaſures of twelve and fourteen ſyllables were interchanged with one another. Cowley was the firſt that inſerted the Alexandrine at pleaſure among the heroick lines of ten ſyllables, and from him Dryden profeſſes to have adopted it.

The Triplit and Alexandrine are not univerſally approved. *Swift* always cenſured them, and wrote ſome lines to ridicule them. In examining their propriety, it is to be conſidered that the eſſence of verſe is regularity, and its ornament is variety. To write verſe, is to diſpoſe ſyllables and ſounds harmonically by ſome known and ſettled rule; a rule however lax enough to ſubſtitute ſimilitude for identity, to admit change without breach of order, and to relieve the ear without diſappointing it. Thus a Latin hexameter is formed from dactyls and ſpondees differently combined; the Engliſh heroick admits of acute or grave ſyllables variouſly diſpoſed. The Latin never deviates into ſeven feet, or exceeds the number of ſeventeen ſyllables; but the Engliſh Alexandrine breaks the lawful

ful bounds, and ſurpriſes the reader with two ſyllables more than he expected.

The effect of the Triplet is the ſame: the ear has been accuſtomed to expect a new rhyme in every couplet; but is on a ſudden ſurprized with three rhymes together, to which the reader could not accommodate his voice, did he not obtain notice of the change from the braces of the margins. Surely there is ſomething unſkilful in the neceſſity of ſuch mechanical direction.

Conſidering the metrical art ſimply as a ſcience, and conſequently excluding all caſualty, we muſt allow that Triplets and Alexandrines, inſerted by caprice, are interruptions of that conſtancy to which ſcience aſpires. And though the variety which they produce may very juſtly be deſired, yet to make our poetry exact, there ought to be ſome ſtated mode of admitting them.

But till ſome ſuch regulation can be formed, I wish them ſtill to be retained in their preſent ſtate. They are ſometimes convenient to the poet. *Fenton* was of opinion, that Dryden was too liberal and Pope too ſparing in their uſe.

The rhymes of Dryden are commonly juſt, and he valued himſelf for his readineſs in finding them; but he is ſometimes open to objection.

It is the common practice of our poets to end the ſecond line with a weak or grave ſyllable:

> Together o'er the Alps methinks we fly,
> Fill'd with ideas of fair *Italy*.

Dryden ſometimes puts the weak rhyme in the firſt:

> Laugh all the powers that favour *tyranny*,
> And all the ſtanding army of the ſky.

Some-

Sometimes he concludes a period or paragraph with the firſt line of a couplet, which, though the French ſeem to do it without irregularity, always diſpleaſes in Engliſh poetry.

The Alexandrine, though much his favourite, is not always very diligently fabricated by him. It invariably requires a break at the ſixth ſyllable; a rule which the modern French poets never violate, but which Dryden ſometimes neglected:

And with paternal thunder vindicates his throne.

Of Dryden's works it was ſaid by Pope that *he could ſelect from them better ſpecimens of every mode of poetry than any other Engliſh writer could ſupply.* Perhaps no nation ever produced a writer that enriched his language with ſuch variety of models. To him we owe the improvement, perhaps the completion of our metre, the refinement of our language, and much of the correctneſs of our ſentiments. By him we were taught *ſapere & fari*, to think naturally and expreſs forcibly. Though Davis has reaſoned in rhyme before him, it may be perhaps maintained that he was the firſt who joined argument with poetry. He ſhewed us the true bounds of a tranſlator's liberty. What was ſaid of Rome, adorned by Auguſtus, may be applied by an eaſy metaphor to Engliſh poetry embelliſhed by Dryden, *lateritiam invenit, marmoream reliquit*, he found it brick, and he left it marble.

THE invocation before the Georgicks is here inſerted from Mr. Milbourne's verſion, that, according to his own propoſal, his verſes may be compared with thoſe which he cenſures.

What makes the richeſt *tilth*, beneath what ſigns
To *plough*, and when to match your *elms* and *vines*;
What care with *flocks* and what with *herds* agrees,
And all the management of frugal *bees*,
I ſing, *Mæcenas!* Ye immenſely clear,
Vaſt orbs of light which guide the rolling year;
Bacchus, and mother *Ceres*, if by you
We fat'ning *corn* for hungry *maſt* purſue,
If, taught by you, we firſt the *cluſter* preſt,
And *thin cold ſtreams* with *ſpritely juice* refreſht.
Ye *fawns*, the preſent *numens* of the field,
Wood-nymphs and *fawns*, your kind aſſiſtance yield,
Your gifts I ſing; and thou, at whoſe ſear'd ſtroke
From rending earth the fiery *courſer* broke,
Great *Neptune*, O aſſiſt my artful ſong;
And thou to whom the woods and groves belong,
Whoſe ſnowy heifers on her flow'ry plains
In mighty herds the *Cæan Iſle* maintains!
Pan, happy ſhepherd, if thy cares divine,
E'er to improve thy *Mænalus* incline;
Leave thy *Lycæan wood* and *native grove*,
And with thy lucky ſmiles our work approve;
Be *Pallas* too, ſweet-oil's inventor, kind;
And he, who firſt the crooked *plough* deſign'd!
Sylvanus, god of all the woods appear,
Whoſe hands a new-drawn tender *cypreſs* bear!
Ye *gods* and *goddeſſes*, who e'er with love
Would guard our paſtures, and our fields improve!
You, who new plants from unknown lands ſupply;
And with condenſing clouds obſcure the ſky,
And drop them ſoftly thence in fruitful ſhowers,
Aſſiſt my enterprize, ye gentle powers!

And thou, great *Cæſar!* though we know not yet
Among what gods thou'lt fix thy lofty ſeat,
Whether thou'lt be the kind *tutelar god*
Of thy own *Rome*, or with thy awful nod,

Ga

Guide the vaſt world, while thy great hand ſhall bear
The fruits and ſeaſons of the turning year,
And thy bright brows thy mother's myrtles wear:
Whether thou'lt all the boundleſs ocean ſway,
And ſea-men only to thyſelf ſhall pray,
Thule, the fartheſt iſland, kneel to thee,
And, that thou may'ſt her ſon by marriage be,
Tethys will for the happy purchaſe yield
To make a *dowry* of her watry field;
Whether thou'lt add to heaven a *brighter ſign*,
And o'er the *ſummer months* ſerenely ſhine;
Where between *Cancer* and *Erigone*,
There yet remains a ſpacious *room* for thee;
Where the hot *Scorpion* too his arms declines,
And more to thee than half his *arch* reſigns;
Whate'er thou'lt be; for ſure the realms below
No juſt pretence to thy command can ſhow:
No ſuch ambition ſways thy vaſt deſires,
Though *Greece* her own *Elyſian fields* admires.
And now, at laſt, contented *Proſerpine*
Can all her mother's earneſt prayers decline.
Whate'er thou'lt be, O guide our gentle courſe,
And with thy ſmiles our bold attempts enforce;
With me th' unknowing *ruſtics'* wants relieve,
And, though on earth, our ſacred vows receive!

Mr. DRYDEN, having received from Rymer his *Remarks on the Tragedies of the laſt Age*, wrote obſervations on the blank leaves; which, having been in the poſſeſſion of Mr. Garrick, are by his favour communicated to the publick, that no particle of Dryden may be loſt.

"That we may the leſs wonder why pity and terror "are not now the only ſprings on which our tragedies "move, and that Shakſpeare may be more excuſed, "Rapin confeſſes that the French tragedies now all

" run on the *tendre*; and gives the reaſon, becauſe love " is the paſſion which moſt predominates in our ſouls, " and that therefore the paſſions repreſented become " inſipid, unleſs they are conformable to the thoughts " of the audience. But it is to be concluded that this " paſſion works not now amongſt the French ſo ſtrongly " as the other two did amongſt the ancients. Amongſt " us, who have a ſtronger genius for writing, the " operations from the writing are much ſtronger: " for the raiſing of Shakſpeare's paſſions is more from " the excellency of the words and thoughts, than the " juſtneſs of the occaſion; and if he has been able to " pick ſingle occaſions, he has never founded the " whole reaſonably: yet, by the genius of poetry in " writing, he has ſucceeded.

" Rapin attributes more to the *diction*, that is, to " the words and diſcourſe of a tragedy, than Ariſtotle " has done, who places them in the laſt rank of beau- " ties; perhaps, only laſt in order, becauſe they are " the laſt product of the deſign, of the diſpoſition or " connection of its parts; of the characters, of the " manners of thoſe characters, and of the thoughts " proceeding from thoſe manners. Rapin's words are " remarkable: 'Tis not the admirable intrigue, the " ſurpriſing events, and extraordinary incidents, that " make the beauty of a tragedy; 'tis the diſcourſes, " when they are natural and paſſionate: ſo are Shak- " ſpeare's.

" The parts of a poem, tragick or heroick, are,

" 1. The fable itſelf.

" 2. The order or manner of its contrivance, in re- " lation of the parts to the whole.

" 3.

" 3. The manners, or decency of the characters, in " ſpeaking or acting what is proper for them, and " proper to be ſhewn by the poet.

" 4. The thoughts which expreſs the manners.

" 5. The words which expreſs thoſe thoughts.

" In the laſt of theſe, Homer excels Virgil; Virgil " all other ancient poets; and Shakſpeare all modern " poets.

" For the ſecond of theſe, the order: the meaning " is, that a fable ought to have a beginning, middle, " and an end, all juſt and natural; ſo that that part, " *e. g.* which is the middle, could not naturally be " the beginning or end, and ſo of the reſt; all de- " pend on one another, like the links of a curious " chain. If terror and pity are only to be raiſed, " certainly this author follows Ariſtotle's rules, and " Sophocles' and Euripides's example: but joy may " be raiſed too, and that doubly; either by ſeeing a " wicked man puniſhed, or a good man at laſt fortu- " nate; or perhaps indignation, to ſee wickedneſs proſ- " perous, and goodneſs depreſſed: both theſe may be " profitable to the end of tragedy, reformation of man- " ners; but the laſt improperly, only as it begets pity " in the audience: though Ariſtotle, I confeſs, places " tragedies of this kind in the ſecond form.

" He who undertakes to anſwer this excellent cri- " tique of Mr. Rymer, in behalf of our Engliſh poets " againſt the Greek, ought to do it in this manner. " Either by yielding to him the greateſt part of what " he contends for, which conſiſts in this, that the " μύθος, *i. e.* the deſign and conduct of it, is more " conducing in the Greeks to thoſe ends of tragedy, " which Ariſtotle and he propoſe, namely, to cauſe

" terror and pity: yet the granting this does not ſet
" the Greeks above the Engliſh poets.

" But the anſwerer ought to prove two things: firſt,
" that the fable is not the greateſt maſter-piece of a
" tragedy, though it be the foundation of it.

" Secondly, That other ends as ſuitable to the na-
" ture of tragedy may be found in the Engliſh, which
" were not in the Greek.

" Ariſtotle places the fable firſt; not *quoad digni-*
" *tatem, ſed quoad fundamentum:* for a fable, never
" ſo movingly contrived to thoſe ends of his, pity and
" terror, will operate nothing on our affections, ex-
" cept the characters, manners, thoughts, and words,
" are ſuitable.

" So that it remains for Mr. Rymer to prove, that
" in all thoſe, or the greateſt part of them, we are in-
" ferior to Sophocles and Euripides: and this he has
" offered at, in ſome meaſure; but, I think, a little
" partially to the ancients.

" For the fable itſelf; 'tis in the Engliſh more
" adorned with epiſodes, and larger than in the Greek
" poets; conſequently more diverting. For, if the
" action be but one, and that plain, without any
" counterturn of deſign or epiſode, *i. e.* under-plot,
" how can it be ſo pleaſing as the Engliſh, which
" have both under-plot and a turned deſign, which
" keeps the audience in expectation of the ca-
" taſtrophe? whereas in the Greek poets we ſee
" through the whole deſign at firſt.

" For the characters, they are neither ſo many nor
" ſo various in Sophocles and Euripides, as in Shak-
" ſpeare and Fletcher; only they are more adapted to
" thoſe

" thoſe ends of tragedy which Ariſtotle commends to " us, pity and terror.

" The manners flow from the characters, and con- " ſequently muſt partake of their advantages and diſ- " advantages.

" The thoughts and words, which are the fourth " and fifth beauties of tragedy, are certainly more no- " ble and more poetical in the Engliſh than in the " Greek, which muſt be proved by comparing them, " ſomewhat more equitably than Mr. Rymer has done.

" After all, we need not yield that the Engliſh way " is leſs conducing to move pity and terror, becauſe " they often ſhew virtue oppreſſed and vice puniſhed; " where they do not both, or either, they are not to " be defended.

" And if we ſhould grant that the Greeks performed " this better, perhaps it may admit of diſpute, whether " pity and terror are either the prime, or at leaſt the " only ends of tragedy.

" 'Tis not enough that Ariſtotle has ſaid ſo; for " Ariſtotle drew his models of tragedy from Sophocles " and Euripides; and, if he had ſeen ours, might " have changed his mind. And chiefly we have to ſay " (what I hinted on pity and terror, in the laſt paragraph " ſave one), that the puniſhment of vice and reward of " virtue are the moſt adequate ends of tragedy, becauſe " moſt conducing to good example of life. Now pity is " not ſo eaſily raiſed for a criminal, and the ancient " tragedy always repreſents its chief perſon ſuch, as " it is for an innocent man; and the ſuffering of inno- " cence and puniſhment of the offender is of the na- " ture of Engliſh tragedy: contrarily, in the Greek, " innocence is unhappy often, and the offender eſcapes.

" Then we are not touched with the ſufferings of any " ſort of men ſo much as of lovers; and this was al- " moſt unknown to the ancients; ſo that they neither " adminiſtered poetical juſtice, of which Mr. Rymer " boaſts, ſo well as we; neither knew they the beſt " common-place of pity, which is love.

" He therefore unjuſtly blames us for not building " on what the ancients left us; for it ſeems, upon " conſideration of the premiſes, that we have wholly " finiſhed what they began.

" My judgement on this piece is this, that it is " extremely learned; but that the author of it is " better read in the Greek than in the Engliſh poets; " that all writers ought to ſtudy this critique, as the " beſt account I have ever ſeen of the ancients; that " the model of tragedy he has here given, is ex- " cellent, and extreme correct; but that it is not the " only model of all tragedy, becauſe it is too much " circumſcribed in plot, characters, &c.; and, laſtly, " that we may be taught here juſtly to admire and " imitate the ancients, without giving them the pre- " ference with this author, in prejudice to our own " country.

" Want of method in this excellent treatiſe, " makes the thoughts of the author ſometimes ob- " ſcure.

" His meaning, that pity and terror are to be moved, " is, that they are to be moved as the means conduc- " ing to the ends of tragedy, which are pleaſure and " inſtruction.

" And theſe two ends may be thus diſtinguiſhed. " The chief end of the poet is to pleaſe; for his im- " mediate reputation depends on it.

" The

" The great end of the poem is to inſtruct, which is " performed by making pleaſure the vehicle of that " inſtruction; for poeſy is an art, and all arts are made " to profit. *Rapin.*

" The pity, which the poet is to labour for, is for " the criminal, not for thoſe or him whom he has mur- " dered, or who have been the occaſion of the tragedy. " The terror is likewiſe in the puniſhment of the ſame " criminal; who, if he be repreſented too great an " offender, will not be pitied: if altogether innocent, " his puniſhment will be unjuſt.

" Another obſcurity is, where he ſays Sophocles " perfected tragedy by introducing the third actor: that " is, he meant three kinds of action; one company ſing- " ing, or another playing on the muſick; a third dancing.

" To make a true judgement in this competition " betwixt the Greek poets and the Engliſh, in " tragedy:

" Conſider, firſt, how Ariſtotle has defined a tragedy. " Secondly, what he aſſigns the end of it to be. " Thirdly, what he thinks the beauties of it. " Fourthly, the means to attain the end propoſed.

" Compare the Greek and Engliſh tragick poets " juſtly, and without partiality, according to thoſe " rules.

" Then, ſecondly, conſider whether Ariſtotle has " made a juſt definition of tragedy; of its parts, of its " ends, and of its beauties; and whether he, having " not ſeen any others but thoſe of Sophocles, Euri- " pides, &c. had or truly could determine what all " the excellences of tragedy are, and wherein they " conſiſt.

" Next ſhew in what ancient tragedy was deficient: " for example, in the narrowneſs of its plots, and

" fewneſs of perſons, and try whether that be not a
" fault in the Greek poets; and whether their excel-
" lency was ſo great, when the variety was viſibly ſo
" little; or whether what they did was not very eaſy
" to do.

" Then make a judgement on what the Engliſh have
" added to their beauties: as, for example, not only
" more plot, but alſo new paſſions; as, namely, that
" of love, ſcarce touched on by the ancients, except
" in this one example of Phædra, cited by Mr.
" Rymer; and in that how ſhort they were of
" Fletcher!

" Prove alſo that love, being an heroick paſſion,
" is fit for tragedy, which cannot be denied, becauſe
" of the example alledged of Phædra; and how far
" Shakſpeare has outdone them in friendſhip, &c.

" To return to the beginning of this enquiry; con-
" ſider if pity and terror be enough for tragedy to
" move: and I believe, upon a true definition of
" tragedy, it will be found that its work extends
" farther, and that it is to reform manners, by a
" delightful repreſentation of human life in great per-
" ſons, by way of dialogue. If this be true, then not
" only pity and terror are to be moved, as the only
" means to bring us to virtue, but generally love to
" virtue, and hatred to vice; by ſhewing the rewards
" of one, and puniſhments of the other; at leaſt, by
" rendering virtue always amiable, tho' it be ſhewn un-
" fortunate; and vice deteſtable, though it be ſhewn
" triumphant.

" If, then, the encouragement of virtue and diſ-
" couragement of vice be the proper ends of poetry in
" tragedy, pity and terror, though good means, are

" not

" not the only. For all the paſſions, in their turns,
" are to be ſet in a ferment: as joy, anger, love, fear,
" are to be uſed as the poet's common-places; and a
" general concernment for the principal actors is to be
" raiſed, by making them appear ſuch in the charac-
" ters, their words, and actions, as will intereſt the
" audience in their fortunes.

" And if, after all, in a larger ſenſe, pity compre-
" hends this concernment for the good, and terror in-
" cludes deteſtation for the bad, then let us conſider
" whether the Engliſh have not anſwered this end of
" tragedy, as well as the ancients, or perhaps better.

" And here Mr. Rymer's objections againſt theſe
" plays are to be impartially weighed, that we may
" ſee whether they are of weight enough to turn the
" balance againſt our countrymen.

" 'Tis evident thoſe plays, which he arraigns, have
" moved both thoſe paſſions in a high degree upon the
" ſtage.

" To give the glory of this away from the
" poet, and to place it upon the actors, ſeems unjuſt.

" One reaſon is, becauſe whatever actors they have
" found, the event has been the ſame; that is, the
" ſame paſſions have been always moved; which ſhews
" that there is ſomething of force and merit in the
" plays themſelves, conducing to the deſign of raiſing
" theſe two paſſions: and ſuppoſe them ever to have
" been excellently acted, yet action only adds grace,
" vigour, and more life, upon the ſtage; but cannot
" give it wholly where it is not firſt. But, ſecondly,
" I dare appeal to thoſe who have never ſeen them
" acted, if they have not found theſe two paſſions
" moved within them: and if the general voice will
" carry it, Mr. Rymer's prejudice will take off his
" *ſingle teſtimony.*

" This,

" This, being matter of fact, is reaſonably to be eſ-
" tabliſhed by this appeal; as if one man ſays 'tis night,
" the reſt of the world conclude it to be day; there
" needs no farther argument againſt him, that it is ſo.

" If he urge, that the general taſte is depraved, his
" arguments to prove this can at beſt but evince that
" our poets took not the beſt way to raiſe thoſe paſ-
" ſions; but experience proves againſt him, that theſe
" means, which they have uſed, have been ſucceſsful,
" and have produced them.

" And one reaſon of that ſucceſs is, in my opinion,
" this, that Shakſpeare and Fletcher have written to
" the genius of the age and nation in which they lived;
" for though nature, as he objects, is the ſame in all
" places, and reaſon too the ſame; yet the climate,
" the age, the diſpoſition of the people, to whom
" a poet writes, may be ſo different, that what pleaſed
" the Greeks would not ſatisfy an Engliſh audience.

" And if they proceeded upon a foundation of truer
" reaſon to pleaſe the Athenians than Shakſpeare and
" Fletcher to pleaſe the Engliſh, it only ſhews that
" the Athenians were a more judicious people; but
" the poet's buſineſs is certainly to pleaſe the audience.

" Whether our Engliſh audience have been pleaſed
" hitherto with acorns, as he calls it, or with bread,
" is the next queſtion; that is, whether the means
" which Shakſpeare and Fletcher have uſed in their
" plays to raiſe thoſe paſſions before named, be better
" applied to the ends by the Greek poets than by them.
" And perhaps we ſhall not grant him this wholly:
" let it be granted that a writer is not to run down
" with the ſtream, or to pleaſe the people by their own
" uſual methods, but rather to reform their judgements,

" it

" it ſtill remains to prove that our theatre needs this " total reformation.

" The faults, which he has found in their deſigns, " are rather wittily aggravated in many places than " reaſonably urged; and as much may be returned " on the Greeks, by one who were as witty as him- " ſelf.

" 2. They deſtroy not, if they are granted, the " foundation of the fabrick; only take away from the " beauty of the ſymmetry: for example, the faults " in the character of the King in King and No-king are " not, as he makes them, ſuch as render him deteſta- " ble, but only imperfections which accompany human " nature, and are for the moſt part excuſed by the vi- " olence of his love; ſo that they deſtroy not our pity " or concernment for him: this anſwer may be applied " to moſt of his objections of that kind.

" And Rollo committing many murders, when he " is anſwerable but for one, is too ſeverely arraigned " by him; for it adds to our horror and deteſtation of " the criminal: and poetick juſtice is not neglected " neither; for we ſtab him in our minds for every of- " fence which he commits; and the point, which the " poet is to gain on the audience, is not ſo much in " the death of an offender as the raiſing an horror of " his crimes.

" That the criminal ſhould neither be wholly guilty, " nor wholly innocent, but ſo participating of both as " to move both pity and terror, is certainly a good rule, " but not perpetually to be obſerved; for that were " to make all tragedies too much alike, which objec- " tion he foreſaw, but has not fully anſwered.

" To conclude, therefore: if the plays of the an- " cients are more correctly plotted, ours are more beau-

" tifully written. And if we can raiſe paſſions as high " on worſe foundations, it ſhews our genius in tragedy " is greater; for, in all other parts of it, the Engliſh " have manifeſtly excelled them."

THE

* * In theſe his obſervations on a tract of Rymer's, which, to give it accurately, is entitled "The tragedies of the laſt age con- " ſidered," Mr. Dryden terms this moſt abſurd of all books of the kind, an excellent critique, for which commendation hardly any reaſon can be found, other than that he ſtood in awe of the writer. Dryden every where profeſſes himſelf an admirer of Shakſpeare, and it is the aim of this critic to turn all he has written to ridicule. Out of many paſſages in another diſcourſe of his entitled 'A ſhort 'view of tragedy,' that are not to be matched for their abſurdity, I ſelect the following ſummary of the character of our great dramatic poet:

"Shakſpeare's genius lay for comedy and humour. In tragedy " he appears quite out of his element; his brains are turned, he " raves and rambles, without any coherence, any ſpark of reaſon, " or any rule to controul him, or ſet bounds to his phrenzy. His " imagination was ſtill running after his maſters, the coblers, and " pariſh clerks, and Old Teſtament Stroulers. So he might make " bold with Portia, as they had done with the Virgin Mary. Who, " in a church acting their play called the Incarnation, had uſually " the Ave Mary mumbled over to a ſtradling wench (for the bleſſed " Virgin), ſtraw-hatted, blue aproned, big-bellied, with her im- " maculate conception up to her chin."

With a degree of faſtidious inſolence to which hardly any critic ever arrived, and in a ſtrain of buffoonery peculiar to himſelf, he laughs to ſcorn the plot, the manners and the ſentiments of Othello, and makes ſport with the author in his cenſures of Julius Cæſar.

In the former of the above tracts he promiſes his friend Fleetwood Shepheard, to whom it is addreſſed, "ſome reflections on that " Paradiſe Loſt of Milton's, which ſome are pleaſed to call a poem," but they do not appear to have been ever publiſhed. This ſarcaſtical expreſſion has not eſcaped the notice of Mr. Fenton, and bubop Newton.

L

THE original of the following letter is preſerved in the Library at Lambeth, and was kindly imparted to the publick by the reverend Dr. Vyſe.

Copy of an original Letter from John Dryden, Eſq; to his ſons in Italy, from a MS in the Lambeth Library, marked N° 933. p. 56.

(Superſcribed)

" Al Illuſtriſſimo Sig^re
" Carlo Dryden Camariere
" d'Honore A. S. S.
" In Roma.
" Franca per Mantoua.

" Sept. the 3d, our ſtyle.

" Dear Sons,

" Being now at Sir William Bowyer's in the coun-
" try, I cannot write at large, becauſe I find myſelf
" ſomewhat indiſpoſed with a cold, and am thick of
" hearing, rather worſe than I was in town. I am
" glad to find, by your letter of July 26th, your ſtyle,
" that you are both in health; but wonder you ſhould
" think me ſo negligent as to forget to give you an
" account of the ſhip in which your parcel is to come.
" I have written to you two or three letters concern-
" ing it, which I have ſent by ſafe hands, as I told
" you, and doubt not but you have them before this
" can arrive to you. Being out of town, I have for-
" gotten the ſhip's name, which your mother will en-
" quire, and put it into her letter, which is joined
" with mine. But the maſter's name I remember: he
" is called Mr. Ralph Thorp; the ſhip is bound to

It may ſomewhat abate the reſentment of the reader to be told, that this redoubted critic was the author of an heroic tragedy called "Edgar," which, as ſoon as publiſhed, determined his character, and as a dramatick writer ſunk him into contempt.

" Leghorn,

" Leghorn, conſigned to Mr. Peter and Mr. Tho. Ball,
" merchants. I am of your opinion, that by Ton-
" ſon's means almoſt all our letters have miſcarried
" for this laſt year. But, however, he has miſſed of
" his deſign in the Dedication, though he had pre-
" pared the book for it; for in every figure of Eneas
" he has cauſed him to be drawn like King William,
" with a hooked noſe. After my return to town, I
" intend to alter a play of Sir Robert Howard's, writ-
" ten long ſince, and lately put by him into my hands:
" 'tis called *The Conqueſt of China by the Tartars*. It
" will coſt me ſix weeks ſtudy, with the probable be-
" nefit of an hundred pounds. In the mean time I
" am writing a ſong for St. Cecilia's Feaſt, who, you
" know, is the patroneſs of muſick. This is trouble-
" ſome, and no way beneficial; but I could not deny
" the Stewards of the Feaſt, who came in a body to
" me to deſire that kindneſs, one of them being Mr.
" Bridgman, whoſe parents are your mother's friends.
" I hope to ſend you thirty guineas between Michael-
" maſs and Chriſtmaſs, of which I will give you an
" account when I come to town. I remember the
" counſel you give me in your letter; but diſſembling,
" though lawful in ſome caſes, is not my talent; yet,
" for your ſake, I will ſtruggle with the plain open-
" neſs of my nature, and keep-in my juſt reſentments
" againſt that degenerate order. In the mean time, I
" flatter not myſelf with any manner of hopes, but
" do my duty, and ſuffer for God's ſake; being aſ-
" ſured, beforehand, never to be rewarded, though
" the times ſhould alter. Towards the latter end of
" this month, September, Charles will begin to reco-
" ver his perfect health, according to his nativity,
" which,

"which, caſting it myſelf, I am ſure is true, and all "things hitherto have happened accordingly to the "very time that I predicted them: I hope at the ſame "time to recover more health, according to my age. "Remember me to poor Harry, whoſe prayers I ear-"neſtly deſire. My Virgil ſucceeds in the world be-"yond its deſert or my expectation. You know the "profits might have been more; but neither my con-"ſcience nor my honour would ſuffer me to take them: "but I never can repent of my conſtancy, ſince I am "thoroughly perſuaded of the juſtice of the cauſe for "which I ſuffer. It has pleaſed God to raiſe up many "friends to me amongſt my enemies, though they who "ought to have been my friends are negligent of me. "I am called to dinner, and cannot go on with this "letter, which I deſire you to excuſe; and am

"Your moſt affectionate father,

"JOHN DRYDEN."

*** As many of Dryden's dramatic compoſitions were operas, or rather they ſo far reſembled the Italian and French opera by an intermixture of muſic with the dialogue as to be called by that name, it was a ſingular felicity that they were ſet to muſic by Purcell, who, though bred in a choir, and a church muſician, was at that time, like ſome others of his profeſſion, equally at the ſervice of the theatre. The dramas called Dryden's, to which he compoſed the muſic, were King Arthur; Oedipus, written in conjunction with Lee; the Indian Queen, in which Sir Robert Howard had a hand; and the Tempeſt, altered from Shakeſpeare by himſelf, and Sir William Davenant. In the firſt is a froſt ſcene, the muſic to which, beſides that it is intrinſically excellent, is admirably ſuited to the words. In the Indian Queen, is that celebrated baſs ſong 'Ye twice ten hundred deities;' and in the Tempeſt are ſome of the fineſt airs and ſweeteſt harmonies that ever delighted the human ear.

Dryden had no ſkill in muſic. His wife, lady Elizabeth Howard, had been a ſcholar of Purcell. Mrs. Purcell, in the dedication of the Orpheus Britannicus, returns her thanks to that lady for her having

erected

erected a fair monument over his aſhes, and gracing it with an inſcription. Dryden being living at the time, it is highly probable that the inſcription was of his compoſing. He wrote an ode on the death of Purcell, and Dr. Blow ſet it to muſic. It was publiſhed in ſcore by one of the Playfords, but is not to be found in Dryden's Miſcellany; and we owe it to the Reverend Mr. Broughton of the Temple, that it now appears in a collection of Dryden's poems, in two volumes 12mo. 1743. The initial line,

'Mark how the lark and linnet ſing,'

ſhould read,

'Hark how the lark and linnet ſing.'

SMITH.

EDMUND SMITH is one of thoſe lucky writers who have, without much labour, attained high reputation, and who are mentioned with reverence rather for the poſſeſſion than the exertion of uncommon abilities.

Of his life little is known; and that little claims no praiſe but what can be given to intellectual excellence, ſeldom employed to any virtuous purpoſe. His character, as given by Mr. Oldiſworth, with all the partiality of friendſhip, which is ſaid by Dr. Burton to ſhow *what fine things one man of parts can ſay to another*, and which, however, compriſes great part of what can be known of Mr. Smith, it is better to tranſcribe at once, than to take by pieces. I ſhall ſubjoin ſuch little memorials as accident has enabled me to collect.

Mr. EDMUND SMITH was the only ſon of an eminent merchant, one Mr. Neale, by a daughter of the famous baron Lechmere. Some misfortunes of

his father, which were ſoon after followed by his death, were the occaſion of the ſon's being left very young in the hands of a near relation (one who married Mr. Neale's ſiſter), whoſe name was Smith.

This gentleman and his lady treated him as their own child, and put him to Weſtminſter-ſchool under the care of Dr. Buſby; whence, after the loſs of his faithful and generous guardian (whoſe name he aſſumed and retained), he was removed to Chriſt-church in Oxford, and there by his aunt handſomely maintained till her death; after which he continued a member of that learned and ingenious ſociety, till within five years of his own; though, ſome time before his leaving Chriſt-church, he was ſent for by his mother to Worceſter, and owned and acknowledged as her legitimate ſon; which had not been mentioned, but to wipe off the aſperſions that were ignorantly caſt by ſome on his birth. It is to be remembered for our author's honour, that, when at Weſtminſter election he ſtood a candidate for one of the univerſities, he ſo ſignally diſtinguiſhed himſelf by his conſpicuous performances, that there aroſe no ſmall contention between the repreſentative electors of Trinity-college in Cambridge and Chriſt-church in Oxon, which of thoſe two royal ſocieties ſhould adopt him as their own. But the electors of Trinity-college having the preference of choice that year, they reſolutely elected him; who yet, being invited at the ſame time to Chriſt-church, choſe to accept of a ſtudentſhip there. Mr. Smith's perfections, as well natural as acquired, ſeem to have been formed upon Horace's plan; who ſays, in his Art of Poetry,

"—Ego nec ſtudium ſine divite vena,
"Nec rude quid proſit video ingenium: alterius ſic
"Altera poſcit opem res, & conjurat amice."

He

He was endowed by Nature with all thoſe excellent and neceſſary qualifications which are previous to the accompliſhment of a great man. His memory was large and tenacious, yet, by a *curious felicity chiefly* ſuſceptible of the fineſt impreſſions it received from the beſt authors he read, which it always preſerved in their primitive ſtrength and amiable order.

He had a quickneſs of apprehenſion, and vivacity of underſtanding, which eaſily took in and ſurmounted the moſt ſubtle and knotty parts of mathematicks and metaphyſicks. His wit was prompt and flowing, yet ſolid and piercing; his taſte delicate, his head clear, and his way of expreſſing his thoughts perſpicuous and engaging. I ſhall ſay nothing of his perſon, which yet was ſo well *turned*, that no neglect of himſelf in his dreſs could render it diſagreeable; inſomuch that the fair ſex, who obſerved and eſteemed him, at once commended and reproved him by the name of the *handſome* ſloven. An eager but generous and noble emulation grew up with him; which (as it were a rational ſort of inſtinct) puſhed him upon ſtriving to excel in every art and ſcience that could make him a credit to his college, and that college the ornament of the moſt learned and polite univerſity; and it was his happineſs to have ſeveral contemporaries and fellow-ſtudents who exerciſed and excited this virtue in themſelves and others, thereby becoming ſo deſervedly in favour with this age, and ſo good a proof of its nice diſcernment. His judgement, naturally good, ſoon ripened into an exquiſite fineneſs and diſtinguiſhing ſagacity, which as it was active and buſy, ſo it was vigorous and manly, keeping even paces with a rich and ſtrong imagination, always upon the wing, and never

tired with aſpiring. Hence it was, that, though he writ as young as Cowley, he had no puerilities; and his earlieſt productions were ſo far from having any thing in them mean and trifling, that, like the junior compoſitions of Mr. Stepney, they may make grey authors bluſh. There are many of his firſt eſſays in oratory, in epigram, elegy, and epique, ſtill handed about the univerſity in manuſcript, which ſhew a maſterly hand; and, though maimed and injured by frequent tranſcribing, make their way into our moſt celebrated miſcellanies, where they ſhine with uncommon luſtre. Beſides thoſe verſes in the Oxford books, which he could not help ſetting his name to, ſeveral of his compoſitions came abroad under other names, which his own ſingular modeſty, and faithful ſilence, ſtrove in vain to conceal. The Encœnia and public Collections of the Univerſity upon State Subjects were never in ſuch eſteem, either for elegy or congratulation, as when he contributed moſt largely to them; and it was natural for thoſe, who knew his peculiar way of writing, to turn to his ſhare in the work, as by far the moſt reliſhing part of the entertainment. As his parts were extraordinary, ſo he well knew how to improve them; and not only to poliſh the diamond, but enchaſe it in the moſt ſolid and durable metal. Though he was an academick the greateſt part of his life, yet he contracted no ſourneſs of temper, no ſpice of pedantry, no itch of diſputation, or obſtinate contention for the old or new philoſophy, no aſſuming way of dictating to others; which are faults (though excuſable) which ſome are inſenſibly led into, who are conſtrained to dwell long within the walls of a private college. His converſation was pleaſant and inſtructive; and

what Horace ſaid of Plotius, Varius, and Virgil, might juſtly be applied to him:

"Nil ego contulerim jucundo ſanus Amico."
Sat. v. l. 1.

As correct a writer as he was in his moſt elaborate pieces, he read the works of others with candor, and reſerved his greateſt ſeverity for his own compoſitions; being readier to cheriſh and advance, than damp or depreſs a riſing genius, and as patient of being excelled himſelf (if any could excel him) as induſtrious to excel others.

'Twere to be wiſhed he had confined himſelf to a particular profeſſion, who was capable of ſurpaſſing in any; but in this, his want of application was in a great meaſure owing to his want of due encouragement.

He paſſed through the exerciſes of the college and univerſity with unuſual applauſe; and though he often ſuffered his friends to call him off from his retirements, and to lengthen out thoſe jovial avocations, yet his return to his ſtudies was ſo much the more paſſionate, and his intention upon thoſe refined pleaſures of reading and thinking ſo vehement (to which his facetious and unbended intervals bore no proportion), that the habit grew upon him, and the ſeries of meditation and reflection being kept up whole weeks together, he could better ſort his ideas, and take in the ſundry parts of a ſcience at one view, without interruption or confuſion. Some indeed of his acquaintance, who were pleaſed to diſtinguiſh between the wit and the ſcholar, extolled him altogether on the account of the firſt of theſe titles; but others, who knew him better, could not forbear doing him juſtice as a prodigy

digy in both kinds. He had ſignalized himſelf, in the ſchools, as a philoſopher and polemick of extenſive knowledge and deep penetration; and went through all the courſes with a wiſe regard to the dignity and importance of each ſcience. I remember him in the Divinity-ſchool reſponding and diſputing with a perſpicuous energy, a ready exactneſs, and commanding force of argument, when Dr. Jane worthily preſided in the chair; whoſe condeſcending and diſintereſted commendation of him gave him ſuch a reputation as ſilenced the envious malice of his enemies, who durſt not contradict the approbation of ſo profound a maſter in theology. None of thoſe ſelf-ſufficient creatures, who have either triſled with philoſophy, by attempting to ridicule it, or have encumbered it with novel terms, and burdenſome explanations, underſtood its real weight and purity half ſo well as Mr. Smith. He was too diſcerning to allow of the character of unprofitable, rugged, and abſtruſe, which ſome ſuperficial ſcioliſts (ſo very ſmooth and polite as to admit of no impreſſion), either out of an unthinking indolence, or an ill-grounded prejudice, had affixed to this ſort of ſtudies. He knew the thorny terms of philoſophy ſerved well to fence-in the true doctrines of religion; and looked upon ſchool-divinity as upon a rough but well-wrought armour, which might at once adorn and defend the Chriſtian hero, and equip him for the combat.

Mr. Smith had a long and perfect intimacy with all the Greek and Latin Claſſicks; with whom he had carefully compared whatever was worth peruſing in the French, Spaniſh, and Italian (to which languages he was no ſtranger), and in all the celebrated writers of his

his own country. But then, according to the curious obſervation of the late earl of Shafteſbury, he kept the poet in awe by regular criticiſm, and, as it were, married the two arts for their mutual ſupport and improvement. There was not a tract of credit, upon that ſubject, which he had not diligently examined, from Ariſtotle down to Hedelin and Boſſu; ſo that, having each rule conſtantly before him, he could carry the art through every poem, and at once point out the graces and deformities. By this means he ſeemed to read with a deſign to correct, as well as imitate.

Being thus prepared, he could not but taſte every little delicacy that was ſet before him; though it was impoſſible for him at the ſame time to be fed and nouriſhed with any thing but what was ſubſtantial and laſting. He conſidered the ancients and moderns not as parties or rivals for fame, but as architects upon one and the ſame plan, the Art of Poetry; according to which he judged, approved, and blamed, without flattery or detraction. If he did not always commend the compoſitions of others, it was not ill-nature (which was not in his temper), but ſtrict juſtice that would not let him call a few flowers ſet in ranks, a glib meaſure, and ſo many couplets, by the name of poetry: he was of Ben Jonſon's opinion, who could not admire

——Verſes as ſmooth and ſoft as cream,
In which there was neither depth nor ſtream.

And therefore, though his want of complaiſance for ſome men's overbearing vanity made him enemies, yet the better part of mankind were obliged by the freedom of his reflections.

His Bodleian Speech, though taken from a remote and imperfect copy, hath ſhewn the world how great

a maſter he was of the Ciceronian eloq ce, mixed with the conciſeneſs and force of Demoſthenes, the elegant and moving turns of Pliny, and the acute and wiſe reflections of Tacitus.

Since Temple and Roſcommon, no man underſtood Horace better, eſpecially as to his happy diction, rolling numbers, beautiful imagery, and alternate mixture of the ſoft and the ſublime. This endeared Dr. Hannes's odes to him, the fineſt genius for Latin lyrick ſince the Auguſtan Age. His friend Mr. Philips's ode to Mr. St. John (late Lord Bolingbroke), after the manner of Horace's Luſory or Amatorian Odes, is certainly a maſter-piece: but Mr. Smith's Pocockius is of the ſublimer kind, though, like Waller's writings upon Oliver Cromwell, it wants not the moſt delicate and ſurpriſing turns peculiar to the perſon praiſed. I do not remember to have ſeen any thing like it in Dr. Bathurſt, who had made ſome attempts this way with applauſe. He was an excellent judge of humanity; and ſo good an hiſtorian, that in familiar diſcourſe he would talk over the moſt memorable facts in antiquity, the lives, actions, and characters of celebrated men, with amazing facility and accuracy. As he had thoroughly read and digeſted Thuanus's works, ſo he was able to copy after him: and his talent in this kind was ſo well known and allowed, that he had been ſingled out by ſome great men to write a hiſtory, which it was for their intereſt to have done with the utmoſt art and dexterity. I ſhall not mention for what reaſons this deſign was dropped, though they are very much to Mr. Smith's honour. The truth is, and I ſpeak it before living witneſſes, whilſt an agreeable company could fix him upon a ſubject of uſeful literature, nobody

body ſhone to greater advantage: he ſeemed to be that Memmius whom Lucretius ſpeaks of;

—Quem tu, Dea, tempore in omni
Omnibus ornatum voluiſti excellere rebus.

His works are not many, and thoſe ſcattered up and down in Miſcellanies and Collections, being wreſted from him by his friends with great difficulty and reluctance. All of them together make but a ſmall part of that much greater body which lies diſperſed in the poſſeſſion of numerous acquaintance; and cannot perhaps be made entire, without great injuſtice to him, becauſe few of them had his laſt hand, and the tranſcriber was often obliged to take the liberties of a friend. His condolance for the death of Mr. Philips is full of the nobleſt beauties, and hath done juſtice to the aſhes of that ſecond Milton, whoſe writings will laſt as long as the Engliſh language, generoſity, and valour. For him Mr. Smith had contracted a perfect friendſhip; a paſſion he was moſt ſuſceptible of, and whoſe laws he looked upon as ſacred and inviolable.

Every ſubject that paſſed under his pen had all the life, proportion, and embelliſhments beſtowed on it, which an exquiſite ſkill, a warm imagination, and a cool judgement, could poſſibly beſtow on it. The epique, lyrick, elegiac, every ſort of poetry he touched upon (and he had touched upon a great variety), was raiſed to its proper height, and the differences between each of them obſerved with a judicious accuracy. We ſaw the old rules and new beauties placed in admirable order by each other; and there was a predominant fancy and ſpirit of his own infuſed, ſuperior to what ſome draw off from the ancients, or from poeſies here and there culled out of the moderns, by a painful induſtry

duſtry and ſervile imitation. His contrivances were adroit and magnificent; his images lively and adequate; his ſentiments charming and majeſtick; his expreſſions natural and bold; his numbers various and ſounding; and that enameled mixture of claſſical wit, which, without redundance and affectation, ſparkled through his writings, and was no leſs pertinent and agreeable.

His *Phædra* is a conſummate tragedy, and the ſucceſs of it was as great as the moſt ſanguine expectations of his friends could promiſe or foreſee. The number of nights, and the common method of filling the houſe, are not always the ſureſt marks of judging what encouragement a play meets with: but the generoſity of all the perſons of a refined taſte about town was remarkable on this occaſion; and it muſt not be forgotten how zealouſly Mr. Addiſon eſpouſed his intereſt, with all the elegant judgement and diffuſive good-nature for which that accompliſhed gentleman and author is ſo juſtly valued by mankind. But as to *Phædra*, ſhe has certainly made a finer figure under Mr. Smith's conduct, upon the Engliſh ſtage, than either Rome or Athens; and if ſhe excells the Greek and Latin *Phædra*, I need not ſay ſhe ſurpaſſes the French one, though embelliſhed with whatever regular beauties and moving ſoftneſs Racine himſelf could give her.

No man had a juſter notion of the difficulty of compoſing than Mr. Smith, and he ſometimes would create greater difficulties than he had reaſon to apprehend. Writing with eaſe, what (as Mr. Wycherley ſpeaks) may be eaſily written, moved his indignation. When he was writing upon a ſubject, he would ſeriouſly conſider what Demoſthenes, Homer, Virgil, or Horace,

if

ſalive, would ſay upon that occaſion, which whetted him to exceed himſelf as well as others. Nevertheleſs, he could not, or would not, finiſh ſeveral ſubjects he undertook; which may be imputed either to the briſkneſs of his fancy, ſtill hunting after new matter, or to an occaſional indolence, which ſpleen and laſſitude brought upon him, which, of all his foibles, the world was leaſt inclined to forgive. That this was not owing to conceit and vanity, or a fulneſs of himſelf (a frailty which has been imputed to no leſs men than Shakſpeare and Jonſon), is clear from hence; becauſe he left his works to the entire diſpoſal of his friends, whoſe moſt rigorous cenſures he even courted and ſolicited; ſubmitting to their animadverſions and the freedom they took with them, with an unreſerved and prudent reſignation.

I have ſeen ſketches and rough draughts of ſome poems he deſigned, ſet out analytically; wherein the fable, ſtructure, and connexion, the images, incidents, moral, epiſodes, and a great variety of ornaments, were ſo finely laid out, ſo well fitted to the rules of art, and ſquared ſo exactly to the precedents of the ancients, that I have often looked on theſe poetical elements with the ſame concern, with which curious men are affected at the ſight of the moſt entertaining remains and ruins of an antique figure or building. Thoſe fragments of the learned, which ſome men have been ſo proud of their pains in collecting, are uſeleſs rarities, without form and without life, when compared with theſe embryo's which wanted not ſpirit enough to preſerve them; ſo that I cannot help thinking, that, if ſome of them were to come abroad, they would be as highly valued by the poets, as the ſketches of Julio

and Titian are by the painters; though there is nothing in them but a few outlines, as to the deſign and proportion.

It muſt be confeſſed, that Mr. Smith had ſome defects in his conduct, which thoſe are moſt apt to remember who could imitate him in nothing elſe. His freedom with himſelf drew ſeverer acknowledgements from him than all the malice he ever provoked was capable of advancing, and he did not ſcruple to give even his misfortunes the hard name of faults; but, if the world had half his good-nature, all the ſhady parts would be entirely ſtruck out of his character.

A man, who, under poverty, calamities, and diſappointments, could make ſo many friends, and thoſe ſo truly valuable, muſt have juſt and noble ideas of the paſſion of friendſhip, in the ſucceſs of which conſiſted the greateſt, if not the only, happineſs of his life. He knew very well what was due to his birth, though Fortune threw him ſhort of it in every other circumſtance of life. He avoided making any, though perhaps reaſonable, complaints of her diſpenſations, under which he had honour enough to be eaſy, without touching the favours ſhe flung in his way when offered to him at the price of a more durable reputation. He took care to have no dealings with mankind, in which he could not be juſt; and he deſired to be at no other expence in his pretenſions than that of intrinſick merit, which was the only burthen and reproach he ever brought upon his friends. He could ſay, as Horace did of himſelf, what I never yet ſaw any anſlated;

"—Meo ſum pauper in ære."

At

At his coming to town, no man was more ſurrounded by all thoſe who really had or pretended to wit, or more courted by the great men, who had then a power and opportunity of encouraging arts and ſciences, and gave proofs of their fondneſs for the name of Patron in many inſtances, which will ever be remembered to their glory. Mr. Smith's character grew upon his friends by intimacy, and outwent the ſtrongeſt prepoſſeſſions which had been conceived in his favour. Whatever quarrel a few ſour creatures, whoſe obſcurity is their happineſs, may poſſibly have to the age; yet amidſt a ſtudied neglect, and total diſuſe of all thoſe ceremonial attendances, faſhionable equipments, and external recommendations, which are thought neceſſary introductions into the *grande monde*, this gentleman was ſo happy as ſtill to pleaſe; and whilſt the rich, the gay, the noble, and honourable, ſaw how much he excelled in wit and learning, they eaſily forgave him all other differences. Hence it was that both his acquaintance and retirements were his own free choice. What Mr. Prior obſerves upon a very great character, was true of him; *that moſt of his faults brought their excuſe with them.*

Thoſe who blamed him moſt, underſtood him leaſt, it being the cuſtom of the vulgar to charge an exceſs upon the moſt complaiſant, and to form a character by the morals of a few, who have ſometimes ſpoiled an hour or two in good company. Where only fortune is wanting to make a great name, that ſingle exception can never paſs upon the beſt judges and moſt equitable obſervers of mankind; and when the time comes for the world to ſpare their pity, we may juſtly enlarge our demands upon them for their admiration.

Some

Some few years before his death, he had engaged himſelf in ſeveral conſiderable undertakings; in all which he had prepared the world to expect mighty things from him. I have ſeen about ten ſheets of his *Engliſh Pindar*, which exceeded any thing of that kind I could ever hope for in our own language. He had drawn out the plan of a tragedy of the *Lady Jane Grey*, and had gone through ſeveral ſcenes of it. But he could not well have bequeathed that work to better hands than where, I hear, it is at preſent lodged; and the bare mention of two ſuch names may juſtify the largeſt expectations, and is ſufficient to make the town an agreeable invitation.

His greateſt and nobleſt undertaking was *Longinus*. He had finiſhed an entire tranſlation of the *Sublime*, which he ſent to the reverend Mr. Richard Parker, a friend of his, late of Merton College, an exact critick in the Greek tongue, from whom it came to my hands. The French verſion of Monſieur Boileau, though truly valuable, was far ſhort of it. He propoſed a large addition to this work, of notes and obſervations of his own, with an entire ſyſtem of the Art of Poetry, in three books, under the titles of *Thought*, *Diction*, and *Figure*. I ſaw the laſt of theſe perfect, and in a fair copy; in which he ſhewed prodigious judgement and reading; and particularly had reformed the art of Rhetorick, by reducing that vaſt and confuſed heap of terms, with which a long ſucceſſion of pedants had encumbered the world, to a very narrow compaſs, comprehending all that was uſeful and ornamental in poetry. Under each head and chapter, he intended to make remarks upon all the ancients and moderns, the Greek, Latin, Engliſh,

Engliſh, French, Spaniſh, and Italian poets, and to note their ſeveral beauties and defects.

What remains of his works is left, as I am informed, in the hands of men of worth and judgement, who loved him. It cannot be ſuppoſed they would ſuppreſs any thing that was his, but out of reſpect to his memory, and for want of proper hands to finiſh what ſo great a genius had begun.

SUCH is the declamation of Oldiſworth, written while his admiration was yet freſh, and his kindneſs warm; and therefore ſuch as, without any criminal purpoſe of deceiving, ſhews a ſtrong deſire to make the moſt of all favourable truth. I cannot much commend the performance. The praiſe is often indiſtinct, and the ſentences are loaded with words of more pomp than uſe. There is little however, that can be contradicted, even when a plainer tale comes to be told.

EDMUND NEALE, known by the name of Smith, was born at Handley, the ſeat of the Lechmeres, in Worceſterſhire. The year of his birth is uncertain.

He was educated at Weſtminſter. It is known to have been the practice of Dr. Buſby to detain thoſe youths long at ſchool, of whom he had formed the higheſt expectations. Smith took his Maſter's degree on the 8th of July 1696: he therefore was probably admitted into the univerſity in 1689, when we may ſuppoſe him twenty years old.

His reputation for literature in his college was ſuch as has been told; but the indecency and licentiouſneſs of

of his behaviour drew upon him, Dec. 24, 1644, while he was yet only Batchelor, a publick admonition, entered upon record, in order to his expulſion. Of this reproof the effect is not known. He was probably leſs notorious. At Oxford, as we all know, much will be forgiven to literary merit; and of that he had exhibited ſufficient evidence by his excellent ode on the death of the great Orientaliſt, Dr. Pocock, who died in 1691, and whoſe praiſe muſt have been written by Smith when he had been but two years in the univerſity.

This ode, which cloſed the ſecond volume of the *Muſæ Anglicanæ*, though perhaps ſome objections may be made to its Latinity, is by far the beſt Lyrick compoſition in that collection; nor do I know where to find it equalled among the modern writers. It expreſſes, with great felicity, images not claſſical in claſſical diction; its digreſſions and returns have been deſervedly recommended by Trapp as models for imitation.

He has ſeveral imitations of Cowley:

> Teſtitur hinc tot ſermo coloribus
> Quot tu, Pococki, diſſimilis tui
> Orator effers, quot viciſſim
> Te memores celebrare gaudent.

I will not commend the figure which makes the orator *pronounce the colours*, or give to *colours* memory and *delight*. I quote it, however, as an imitation of theſe lines;

> So many languages he had in ſtore,
> That only Fame ſhall ſpeak of him in more.

The ſimile, by which an old man, retaining the fire of his youth, is compared to Ætna flaming through

through the ſnow, which Smith has uſed with great pomp, is ſtolen from Cowley, however little worth the labour of conveyance.

He proceeded to take his degree of Maſter of Arts, July 8, 1696. Of the exerciſes which he performed on that occaſion, I have not heard any thing memorable.

As his years advanced, he advanced in reputation: for he continued to cultivate his mind, though he did not amend his irregularities, by which he gave ſo much offence, that, April 24, 1700, the Dean and Chapter declared, "the place of Mr. Smith void, he "having been convicted of riotous miſbehaviour in the "houſe of Mr. Cole an apothecary; but it was re-"ferred to the Dean when and upon what occaſion "the ſentence ſhould be put in execution."

Thus tenderly was he treated: the governors of his college could hardly keep him, and yet wiſhed that he would not force them to drive him away.

Some time afterwards he aſſumed an appearance of decency; in his own phraſe, he *whitened* himſelf, having a deſire to obtain the cenſorſhip, an office of honour and ſome profit in the college; but when the election came, the preference was given to Mr. *Foulkes*, his junior; the ſame, I ſuppoſe, that joined with *Freind* in an edition of part of Demoſthenes; the cenſor is a tutor, and it was not thought proper to truſt the ſuperintendance of others to a man who took ſo little care of himſelf.

From this time Smith employed his malice and his wit againſt the Dean, Dr. Aldrich, whom he conſidered as the opponent of his claim. Of his lampoon

upon him, I once heard a ſingle line too groſs to be repeated.

But he was ſtill a genius and a ſcholar, and Oxford was unwilling to loſe him; he was endured, with all his pranks and his vices, two years longer; but on Dec. 20, 1705, at the inſtance of all the canons, the ſentence declared five years before was put in execution.

The execution was, I believe, ſilent and tender; for one of his friends, from whom I learned much of his life, appeared not to know it.

He was now driven to London, where he aſſociated himſelf with the Whigs, whether becauſe they were in power, or becauſe the Tories had expelled him, or becauſe he was a Whig by principle, may perhaps be doubted. He was, however, careſſed by men of great abilities, whatever were their party, and was ſupported by the liberality of thoſe who delighted in his converſation.

There was once a deſign hinted at by Oldiſworth, to have made him uſeful. One evening, as he was ſitting with a friend at a tavern, he was called down by the waiter; and, having ſtaid ſome time below, came up thoughtful. After a pauſe, ſaid he to his friend, "He that wanted me below was Addiſon, "whoſe buſineſs was to tell me that a Hiſtory of the "Revolution was intended, and to propoſe that I "ſhould undertake it. I ſaid, 'What ſhall I do with "the character of lord Sunderland?' and Addiſon im-"mediately returned, 'When, Rag, were you drunk "laſt?' and went away."

Captain *Rag* was a name which he got at Oxford by his negligence of dreſs.

This

This ſtory I heard from the late Mr. Clark of Lincoln's Inn, to whom it was told by the friend of Smith.

Such ſcruples might debar him from ſome profitable employments; but as they could not deprive him of any real eſteem, they left him many friends; and no man was ever better introduced to the theatre than he, who, in that violent conflict of parties, had a Prologue and Epilogue from the firſt wits on either ſide.

But learning and nature will now and then take different courſes. His play pleaſed the criticks, and the criticks only. It was, as Addiſon has recorded, hardly heard the third night. Smith had indeed truſted entirely to his merit, had enſured no band of applauders, nor uſed any artifice to force ſucceſs, and found that naked excellence was not ſufficient for its own ſupport.

The play, however, was bought by Lintot, who advanced the price from fifty guineas, the current rate, to ſixty; and Halifax, the general patron, accepted the dedication. Smith's indolence kept him from writing the dedication, till Lintot, after fruitleſs importunity, gave notice that he would publiſh the play without it. Now therefore it was written; and Halifax expected the author with his book, and had prepared to reward him with a place of three hundred pounds a year. Smith, by pride, or caprice, or indolence, or baſhfulneſs, neglected to attend him, though doubtleſs warned and preſſed by his friends, and at laſt miſſed his reward by not going to ſolicit it.

Addiſon has, in the *Spectator*, mentioned the neglect of Smith's tragedy as diſgraceful to the nation, and imputes it to the fondneſs for operas then prevailing. The authority of Addiſon is great; yet the

voice of the people, when to pleaſe the people is the purpoſe, deſerves regard. In this queſtion, I cannot but think the people in the right. The fable is mythological, a ſtory which we are accuſtomed to reject as falſe, and the manners are ſo diſtant from our own, that we know them not from ſympathy, but by ſtudy: the ignorant do not underſtand the action; the learned reject it as a ſchool-boy's tale; *incredulus odi*. What I cannot for a moment believe, I cannot for a moment behold with intereſt or anxiety. The ſentiments thus remote from life are removed yet further by the diction, which is too luxuriant and ſplendid for dialogue, and envelopes the thoughts rather than diſplays them. It is a ſcholar's play, ſuch as may pleaſe the reader rather than the ſpectator; the work of a vigorous and elegant mind, accuſtomed to pleaſe itſelf with its own conceptions, but of little acquaintance with the courſe of life.

Dennis tells us, in one of his pieces, that he had once a deſign to have written the tragedy of *Phædra*; but was convinced that the action was too mythological.

In 1709, a year after the exhibition of *Phædra*, died John Philips, the friend and fellow-collegian of Smith, who, on that occaſion, wrote a poem, which juſtice muſt place among the beſt elegies which our language can ſhew, an elegant mixture of fondneſs and admiration, of dignity and ſoftneſs. There are ſome paſſages too ludicrous; but every human performance has its faults.

This elegy it was the mode among his friends to purchaſe for a guinea; and, as his acquaintance was numerous, it was a very profitable poem.

Of

Of his *Pindar*, mentioned by Oldiſworth, I have never otherwiſe heard. His *Longinus* he intended to accompany with ſome illuſtrations, and had ſelected his inſtances of the falſe *Sublime* from the works of Blackmore.

He reſolved to try again the fortune of the Stage, with the ſtory of Lady Jane Grey. It is not unlikely that his experience of the inefficacy and incredibility of a mythological tale, might determine him to chooſe an action from Engliſh Hiſtory, at no great diſtance from our own times, which was to end in a real event, produced by the operation of known characters.

A ſubject will not eaſily occur that can give more opportunities of informing the underſtanding, for which Smith was unqueſtionably qualified, or for moving the paſſions, in which I ſuſpect him to have had leſs power.

Having formed his plan, and collected materials, he declared that a few months would complete his deſign; and, that he might purſue his work with leſs frequent avocations, he was, in June 1710, invited by Mr. George Ducket to his houſe at Gartham in Wiltſhire. Here he found ſuch opportunities of indulgence as did not much forward his ſtudies, and particularly ſome ſtrong ale, too delicious to be reſiſted. He eat and drank till he found himſelf plethorick: and, then reſolving to eaſe himſelf by evacuation, he wrote to an apothecary in the neighbourhood a preſcription of a purge ſo forcible, that the apothecary thought it his duty to delay it till he had given notice of its danger. Smith, not pleaſed with the contradiction of a ſhopman, and boaſtful of his own knowledge, treated the

notice with rude contempt, and ſwallowed his own medicine, which, in July 1710, brought him to the grave. He was buried at Gartham.

Many years afterwards, Ducket communicated to Oldmixon the hiſtorian, an account pretended to have been received from Smith, that Clarendon's Hiſtory was, in its publication, corrupted by Aldrich, Smalridge, and Atterbury; and that Smith was employed to forge and inſert the alterations.

This ſtory was publiſhed triumphantly by Oldmixon, and may be ſuppoſed to have been eagerly received: but its progreſs was ſoon checked; for finding its way into the Journal of Trevoux, it fell under the eye of Atterbury then an exile in France, who immediately denied the charge, with this remarkable particular, that he never in his whole life had once ſpoken to Smith; his company being, as muſt be inferred, not accepted by thoſe who attended to their characters.

The charge was afterwards very diligently refuted by Dr. Burton of Eaton, a man eminent for literature, and, though not of the ſame party with Aldrich and Atterbury, too ſtudious of truth to leave them burthened with a falſe charge. The teſtimonies which he has collected have convinced mankind that either Smith or Ducket were guilty of wilful and malicious falſehood.

This controverſy brought into view thoſe parts of Smith's life, which with more honour to his name might have been concealed.

Of Smith I can yet ſay a little more. He was a man of ſuch eſtimation among his companions, that the caſual cenſures or praiſes which he dropped in converſation

verſation were conſidered like thoſe of Scaliger, as worthy of preſervation.

He had great readineſs and exactneſs of criticiſm, and by a curſory glance over a new compoſition would exactly tell all its faults and beauties.

He was remarkable for the power of reading with great rapidity, and of retaining with great fidelity what he ſo eaſily collected.

He therefore always knew what the preſent queſtion required; and, when his friends expreſſed their wonder at his acquiſitions, made in a ſtate of apparent negligence and drunkenneſs, he never diſcovered his hours of reading or method of ſtudy, but involved himſelf in affected ſilence, and fed his own vanity with their admiration and conjectures.

One practice he had, which was eaſily obſerved: if any thought or image was preſented to his mind, that he could uſe or improve, he did not ſuffer it to be loſt; but, amidſt the jollity of a tavern, or in the warmth of converſation, very diligently committed it to paper.

Thus it was that he had gathered two quires of hints for his new tragedy; of which Rowe, when they were put into his hands, could make, as he ſays, very little uſe, but which the collector conſidered as a valuable ſtock of materials.

When he came to London, his way of life connected him with the licentious and diſſolute; and he affected the airs and gaiety of a man of pleaſure; but his dreſs was always deficient *: ſcholaſtick cloudineſs ſtill hung about

* The late Dr. Jortin once told me that Smith, being deſirous to make one at a maſquerade, contrived thus to ſave the hire of a dreſs: to a grey ſtuff-damaſk man's night-gown he ſtuck as many ballads printed on ſlips as would cover it, and in this whimſical garb mixed

about him; and his merriment was ſure to produce the ſcorn of his companions.

With all his careleſſneſs, and all his vices, he was one of the murmurers at Fortune; and wondered why he was ſuffered to be poor, when Addiſon was careſſed and preferred: nor would a very little have contented him; for he eſtimated his wants at ſix hundred pounds a year.

In his courſe of reading it was particular, that he had diligently peruſed, and accurately remembered, the old romances of knight errantry.

He had a high opinion of his own merit, and was ſomething contemptuous in his treatment of thoſe whom he conſidered as not qualified to oppoſe or contradict him. He had many frailties; yet it cannot but be ſuppoſed that he had great merit, who could obtain to the ſame play a prologue from Addiſon, and an epilogue from Prior; and who could have at once the patronage of Halifax, and the praiſe of Oldiſworth.

For the power of communicating theſe minute memorials, I am indebted to my converſation with Gilbert Walmſley, late regiſter of the eccleſiaſtical court of Lichfield, who was acquainted both with Smith and Ducket; and declared, that, if the tale concerning Clarendon were forged, he ſhould ſuſpect Ducket of the falſehood; *for Rag was a man of great veracity.*

Of Gilbert Walmſley, thus preſented to my mind, let me indulge myſelf in the remembrance. I knew

[with the company, who followed him up and down, reading and ſinging the ſongs that ſtuck to his back, till one of them had the | boldneſs to pull one of them off, which not being reſented by Smith, as not being felt, the example was followed by others, and he in a ſhort time was deplumed, and obliged to retreat and forego the ; pleaſures of the entertainment.

him very early; he was one of the firſt friends that literature procured me, and I hope that at leaſt my gratitude made me worthy of his notice.

He was of an advanced age, and I was only not a boy; yet he never received my notions with contempt. He was a Whig, with all the virulence and malevolence of his party; yet difference of opinion did not keep us apart. I honoured him, and he endured me.

He had mingled with the gay world, without exemption from its vices or its follies, but had never neglected the cultivation of his mind; his belief of Revelation was unſhaken; his learning preſerved his principles; he grew firſt regular, and then pious.

His ſtudies had been ſo various, that I am not able to name a man of equal knowledge. His acquaintance with books was great; and what he did not immediately know he could at leaſt tell where to find. Such was his amplitude of learning, and ſuch his copiouſneſs of communication, that it may be doubted whether a day now paſſes in which I have not ſome advantage from his friendſhip.

At this man's table I enjoyed many chearful and inſtructive hours, with companions ſuch as are not often found; with one who has lengthened, and one who has gladdened life; with Dr. James, whoſe ſkill in phyſick will be long remembered; and with David Garrick, whom I hoped to have gratified with this character of our common friend: but what are the hopes of man! I am diſappointed by that ſtroke of death, which has eclipſed the gaiety of nations, and impoveriſhed the publick ſtock of harmleſs pleaſure.

In

In the Library at Oxford is the following ludicrous Analyſis of *Pocockius:*

EX AUTOGRAPHO.

[Sent by the Author to Mr. Urry.]

OPUSCULUM hoc, Halberdarie ampliſſime, in lucem proferre hactenus diſtuli, judicii tui acumen ſubveritus magis quam bipennis. Tandem aliquando Oden hanc ad te mitto ſublimem, teneram, flebilem, ſuavem, qualem demum divinus (ſi Muſis vacaret) ſcripſiſſet Gaſtrellus: adeo ſcilicet ſublimem ut inter legendum dormire, adeo flebilem ut ridere velis. Cujus elegantiam ut melius inſpicias, verſuum ordinem & materiam breviter referam. 1^mus verſus de duobus præliis decantatis. 2^dus & 3^tius de Lotharingio, cuniculis ſubterraneis, ſaxis, ponto, hoſtibus, & Aſia. 4^tus & 5^tus de catenis, ſubdibus, uncis, draconibus, tigribus & crocodilis. 6^tus, 7^mus, 8^vus, 9^nus, de Gomorrha, de Babylone, Babele, & quodam domi ſuæ peregrino. 10^mus, aliquid de quodam Pocockio. 11^mus, 12^mus, de Syriâ, Solymâ. 13^tius, 14^tius, de Hoſeâ, & quercu, & de juvene quodam valde ſene. 15^tus, 16^tus, de Ætnâ & quomodo Ætna Pocockio ſit valde ſimilis. 17^mus, 18^vus, de tubâ, aſtro, umbrâ, flammis, rotis, Pocockio non neglecto. Cætera de Chriſtianis, Ottomanis, Babyloniis, Arabibus, & graviſſimâ agrorum melancholiâ; de Cæſare *Flacco* *, Neſtore, & miſerando juvenis cujuſdam florentiſſimi fato, anno ætatis ſuæ centeſimo præmaturè abrepti. Quæ omnia cum accuratè ex-

* Pro *Flacco*, animo paulo attentiore, ſcripſiſſem *Maroue.*

 penderis,

penderis, neceſſe eſt ut Oden hanc meam admirandâ planè varietate conſtare fatearis. Subito ad Batavos proficiſcor, lauro ab illis donandus. Prius vero Pembrochienſes voco ad certamen Poeticum. Vale.

Illuſtriſſima tua deoſculor crura.

E. SMITH.

DUKE.

DUKE.

OF Mr. RICHARD DUKE I can find few memorials. He was bred at Weſtminſter and Cambridge*; and Jacob relates, that he was ſome time tutor to the duke of Richmond.

He appears from his writings to have been not ill qualified for poetical compoſitions; and being conſcious of his powers, when he left the univerſity he enliſted himſelf among the wits. He was the familiar friend of Otway; and was engaged, among other popular names, in the tranſlations of Ovid and Juvenal. In his *Review*, though unfiniſhed, are ſome vigorous lines. His poems are not below mediocrity; nor have I found much in them to be praiſed †.

* He went to Trinity College, and took his Maſter's Degree in 1682.

† They make part of a volume publiſhed by Tonſon in 8vo. 1717, containing the poems of the earl of Roſcommon, and the duke of Buckingham's eſſay on poetry, but were firſt publiſhed in Dryden's miſcellany, as were moſt if not all of the poems in this collection.

With

With the Wit he ſeems to have ſhared the diſſoluteneſs of the times: for ſome of his compoſitions are ſuch as he muſt have reviewed with deteſtation in his later days, when he publiſhed thoſe Sermons which *Felton* has commended.

Perhaps, like ſome other fooliſh young men, he rather talked than lived viciouſly, in an age when he that would be thought a Wit was afraid to ſay his prayers; and whatever might have been bad in the firſt part of his life, was ſurely condemned and reformed by his better judgment.

In 1683, being then maſter of arts, and fellow of Trinity College in Cambridge, he wrote a poem on the marriage of the Lady Anne with George Prince of Denmark.

He took orders; and being made prebendary of Glouceſter, became a proctor in convocation for that church, and chaplain to Queen Anne.

In 1710, he was preſented by the biſhop of Wincheſter to the wealthy living of Witney in Oxfordſhire, which he enjoyed but a few months. On February 10, 1710-11, having returned from an entertainment, he was found dead the next morning. His death is mentioned in Swift's Journal.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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